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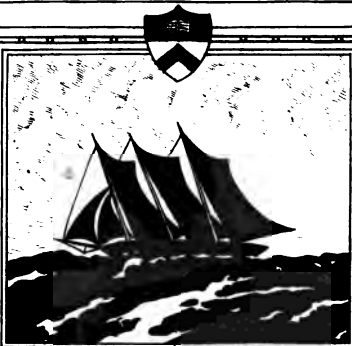
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BOB  
AND  
THE  
GUIDES

BY  
MARY RAYMOND  
SHIPMAN ANDREWS



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## **BOB AND THE GUIDES**









But the Bishop played him well.

—Page 42.





# BOB AND THE GUIDES

BY

MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS

AUTHOR OF "VIVE L'EMPEREUR," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

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1906

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**TROW DIRECTORY  
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
TO  
MY INSPIRATION, COLLABORATOR  
AND PROPERTY  
THE REAL BOB  
PAUL SHIPMAN ANDREWS

*Rockwell*  
3607  
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(RECAP)



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**THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR**



## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

**I** AM Bob. That isn't much of a description of course, but you'll see, later on. My brother calls me the cub, I don't know why, unless because I'm only thirteen, but that seems to me quite a fair age, though of course I don't think myself an octagonarian. This story that I'm going to write is all because of Margaret—my sister-in-law she is now. I told it to her last night, just the way it happened, and she laughed—well, you just ought to have seen her laugh. She laughed herself all over the room, so she tried to talk and couldn't, and then she laughed herself out on to the piazza, but, knowing the nature of women, I wasn't surprised. Girls are queer, anyway, you know, but she's a nice one. She's a sport and likes to do reasonable things, swimming and so forth. She's a really sensible person, as girls go. She said she declared if I'd write this down the way I told it to her, she'd send it to a magazine. Well now, I don't know the

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way I told it, but I'll do the best I can, only it's a good deal of work to write so much. Walter says my words are all wool and a yard wide, which he means to state, I suppose, that I use long ones. Well then, you see Walter took me up into camp in Canada last summer, to his club, where all the guides talk French, and I think that's a good deal of the reason he took me. I talk good French; I don't mean to brag, but I began when I was a child, about five, and I've lived in Paris a year, so I ought. But Walter talks the funniest French you ever heard, and lots of it, with a strong American accent. Anything that ends with "ong" goes. This is what he said to one of the guides:

*"Si nous pouvons venons pendant le printemps, nous allons attraperons beaucoup de poissons."* Now if anyone speaks French they will see that is funny. Walter pounds away at the guides like that and they never crack a smile, they're so polite, but I just squeal. So sometimes when he gets balled up worse than usual he's pretty glad of me to talk French for him, and I guess it's a relief to the guides too.

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Walter and I had been having a fine time in camp, fishing and paddling and tramping about over the portages. We had been in about a week when the first of September came along, which is the beginning of the open season for caribou, you know, and of course we both wanted to get one. So we talked it over with the guides—one of them was the redoubtabull Joe Véro, a Montagnais Indian and the best hunter in the club—and we decided on a plan. Anybody who doesn't know the country won't understand, but it was a good plan. We were to go to a lake near the hunting-ground and camp there over night, and then get up very early in the morning for the hunt. Walter, with Joe Véro, was to go over to the Rivière Mouche Noire, right near us, and hunt there in a canoe, and I was to take a guide and watch on a little marshy lake, which would be only about twenty minutes from us in another direction. It's the best fun there is, going off on a hunt like that. Everybody ought to try it. I had a lovely time, even if I did miss my caribou. I can't understand why I didn't hit that thing, but I think there's something



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wrong, perhaps, with the sight of my rifle, which is a 30-30 smokeless Winchester, and a splendid gun. But I must have that sight examined. It takes so little, in a sight, to make you shoot wrong, you know, and I can't understand how I could have missed it otherwise, for I held right on. Well, anyway I missed it, and we needn't dwell on that, but will pass on. Walter killed his. He always *is* lucky. It was a big buck, "*un gros*," the guides said, and they thought it would weigh between four and five hundred. I didn't see it, at least not all together, because they chopped it up before they brought it into camp, but Walter said it looked like a pony. One must always make allowances for a fortunate hunter. When I observed that to Walter he said "You young cuss," and grinned. Well, they got the beast into camp in chunks, the head being the showiest one, and we had a big supper to celebrate; flapjacks and maple sugar, and orange marmalade and canned lobster, and onions and fried potatoes, and mulligatawney soup and toast, and pickles, and chocolate with canned "lait," and a lot more—all the provisions we had, in fact; for now

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

we had meat we were going back to camp next day. We couldn't eat the caribou because it hadn't been killed long enough. Walter felt fine and let me eat all I wanted and didn't kick at waiting. Then after supper he stood up and looked at the guides with his hands in his pockets, the way he always does when he wants to explain something and is thinking up the French.

"Godin," he said. That's the head guide, Godin, and he cocked his head and said, "*Oui, M'sieur,*" quick, in the nice polite way the guides all have, as if you were doing them a favor when you order them to grease your boots. Walter went on talking.

"Godin, *je crois que demain nous faisait cela.*" Then I squealed, but he just proceeded to continue.

"*S'il ne mouillait pas trop beaucoup, nous allons chez nous par la Rivière Mouche Noire, jusqu'à nous arriverons à Lac Nacsitan*"—then I cut in and said, "*Voilà! On peut s'arrêter à Château Nacsitan, ou se trouve*"—and then Walter kicked me quite hard, and I saw that I was becoming unpopular. But he understood that I saw through *that* move,

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

and knew that he was going home the long way around so as to see Miss Margaret Nelson—which was what she was then. I knew he liked her, you see—Oh, you can't fool me! So I just grinned at Henri Jeunesse, who was one of my two guides, but he didn't know the difference. Then Walter asked them.

*"Est-ce que vous avez pensé que nous allons mouiller?"*

"*Mouiller*" means "to rain" in French-Canadian, you know, and Walter always asked them that every night, in variegated language, just before he said, "*Bon soir.*" And they always answered without a smile.

*"C'est difficile à dire, à c't heure,"* and cocked their eyes up at the sky.

And then they all said, "*Bon soir, M'sieur,*" and "*Bon soir, M'sieur Bob,*" and it sounded something like the people saying "Amen" together in church. Then we went off to our tent, and I'll bet they laughed at Walter when we got away.

The next morning when I woke up I opened one eye and peeped across the tent at Walter. He was

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

away down in his blankets on his cot, and you couldn't see much but an ear or so, but there was one of his eyes gleaming fixedly over at me. The minute he saw mine open, he said:

"You young cuss, get up and make the fire."

So I involuntarily snuggled into my blankets and squealed pitifully a little and moaned:

"It's too cold. It's too soon," and I shut my eyes right up in a hurry.

Pretty soon I heard Walter crooning to himself, and I surmised he was making poetry, so I listened. He makes the funniest poetry you ever heard. He made a lot I can't remember, but this was some of it:

*" Too soon, too soon, too soon, too soon.*

*The fishes peep*

*In the vasty deep,*

*Where down below*

*The winding snow*

*Covers the ocean's ebb and flow.*

*And the birds in the air*

*Without any hair ;*

*And the mighty moon*

*Too soon, too soon !"*

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

That is entirely different from the sort I have to recite in school. Walter's poetry always makes me laugh, it's so queer, and I always know he's happy when he begins.

But before long he got over that fit, and then he roared:

"Cub! Make the fire! Make the merry flames roar amid the greenwood tree! Make 'em. Rise! Rise, son of a mighty race, and race down to the lake and ablute yourself. Hurry up! *Dépêchez! Courons! N'arrête pas! Ablute! Washez vous!*"

I just crawled away in under and moaned. Finally I said:

"Call the guides, why don't you? They'll make it."

Walter shook his head dejectedly.

"Oh, no, my son! I wouldn't be cruel. Not to a guide. *They* don't like to make a fire, either—you don't; why should they?"

Then he began to get up, moaning miserably. "Nobody to make a fire for me—have to do all the work myself. Four guides and a brother, and I have to make the fires"—and all the time he was crawl-

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

ing out in his pink flannel pajamas. "I'm an awfully good brother to you," he said, solemnly. "Some day, when I'm cold in my grave, you'll know how good."

Well, he carried on like an Indian that way, while he piled up birch-bark and sticks, and pulled together the ends of the logs that had been last night's fire. The guides would have made it in half the time, and there were four of them within a hundred yards. I'll bet he wished, later, he'd given them a hail. But it blazed up all right pretty soon, and I lay there comfortably and looked at it and at him, and watched the sunlight jump about the tent in white splotches between the shadows. Out in front the light-green birch branches—the "*bouleau*"—were waving among the dark-green "*épinette*"—that's spruce—and now and then I could see a scrap of water, like a bright steel sword, cutting through them both. It looked awfully pretty.

But Walter kept on complaining about everything on earth, though of course I knew it was nonsense, and that he wouldn't do it so much if he

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

wasn't feeling pretty jolly. Finally he struck his clothes, and then he raised Cain.

"All wet! Sopping! *Mouillé! N'important*—nobody cares! It's only just me. *C'est moi—voilà tout!* Look at that coat—*regarde!*"

He held it up and I regarded, and it *was* rather damp and mussy. Then he hung it up on a cross-stick back of the fire that Godin had put up the night before to dry my stockings on, and he took his trousers and held them up. Now, trousers have such a funny, straddly, helpless look when they're empty, that I laughed out loud.

"What are you laughing at, you young cuss? What's funny, I'd like to know, about my—my—what's that Godin called them the other day?"

I suggested "*pantalons*," but he despised that.

"No. *Non. Pas de tout. Tout de suite. 'Pantalons'* indeed! That's coarse. It was something refined and exquisite—now what was that word?"

Then I remembered that the guides call everything to wear "*linge*," from shoes to an umbrella.

"That's it," said Walter. "*Mon linge. Mon linge sont mouillé. Voilà mon pauvre linge! Je vais*

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

*sécherai mon linge,*” and he hung the things up on the cross-stick so tenderly, and patted them so lovingly that I just rolled around and shrieked with laughter. Then he made one dive for his blankets again and wrapped himself up and ordered me out.

“Now cub, up! It’s your turn. Go and ablute yourself in the lake and when you’re dressed I also will bathe and array my form,” and then he turned over for another nap.

So I pulled myself out and went shivering down to the lake, for it was a pretty crisp morning. But the water felt so fine when I got in that I took a little swim and then I took just a little other swim, so it was perhaps ten minutes when I ran back to the tent again. What horrible vision should meet my despairing eyes when I got there, but Walter’s poor, beloved “*linge*,” half burned up, smoking and burning, with a sharp, wiggly red edge all around the lower part, and smelling like a herd of sheep on fire. And Walter himself snoring! How I yelled! My! Walter and the pink pajamas bounded up, horror-struck and dazed. But he saw quick enough, and then his maniac cries rose to the heavens.



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“Godin! Véro! *Toutes les guides! Venez! Venez damn vite—ici! Apportons de l’eau! De l’eau frette! De l’eau chaude! Venez! Mes choses brûlons! Mes linge, il brûte vite,*” and then some English that my mother wouldn’t allow me to write.

But it brought the guides, and in about half a minute the fire was out and they all were mourning like doves over the trousers. But it wasn’t a patch on Walter’s mourning, which was silent but awful. I’d mourn too, a minute or so, and then I’d go behind the tent and choke myself. You see there wasn’t enough left of the trousers to put on, for they were burned from south to north about two feet, and then from east to west, so as to obliterate the chance of getting into them except sidewise. And then you would be apt to fall out.

I will draw the veil of silence over the painfulness of the next two hours. We managed to have breakfast and break camp and get started, and got Walter pinned up with safety-pins, as nicely as we could fix him, in a red blanket. It wasn’t as much fun as you’d think, for Walter was dignified and treated me politely, which is hard to bear from your

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

brother. But I gathered some crumbs of pleasure walking behind him on the portages and watching him amble along through the woods—he looked like a red flannel mermaid. When he forgot and tried to swing out with long steps and was suddenly hitched back by the exigencies of his apparel, then I dropped off the portage and sat on a log awhile. We went through Lac Orignal—Moose Lake—and then over a portage of “*quatorze arpents*” fourteen acres, half a mile you see; they measure by acres up there, isn't it funny? Then we went down the “Belle Rivière,” and it was bully and “*belle*” too, and after another long portage we struck the head of Lac Nacsitan.

By this time Walter was feeling better and let me indulge unmolestedly in some trivial pleasantries about his fancy-dress mermaid costume. I asked him to let down his hair and get into the water and flop his tail and sing to me, and he only laughed. But when I picked up the end of the red blanket and said I was the lovely lady's page, and yanked him backward, he said:

“Look here, cub, you'll find this darned funny

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up to the dead line, but I'm hanged if you'll find it funny beyond. So be careful."

Therefore I was careful, and exhibited an exhibition of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove.

When the guides were getting the canoes into the water and the charges into the canoes, on Nacsitan, Walter struck his French conversation attitude and began ladling out language to them as cheerfully and politely as if he wasn't looking queerer than a goat.

*"Regardez ici."*

That's the way he began and they all stopped work and regarded him, hard. Glad of the chance, I guess, for he was a holy show, standing on a rock by the water, his hands stuck into imaginative pockets, for you don't find them in blankets, and all that red stuff swaddled around him. George! He looked fierce! It had turned into a blazing hot day, too.

*"Je vais vous expliquerait ce que nous allons faisons"*—I can't remember just the words he *expliqué*-ed in. I guess it would take a giant intellect



The guides stood around, as solemn and respectful as judges.



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for that herculeaneum task. The air trembled with strange and mysterious sounds for ten minutes, and I had to boost him over two chasms. The guides stood around, as solemn and respectful as judges and slaves, and listened with wrapt attention, but they couldn't make him out. I was puzzled a bit myself at first, but knowing both Walter's French and real French, got at it finally, and the oration was clarified this way. Walter wanted to leave some venison at Château Nacsitan—Dr. Nelson's camp—and he wished me to go on ahead and land with it. He also wanted to be paddled within hailing distance, but not for your life near enough to let the Nelsons see his toboggan suit. That's what was so hard for him to explain to the guides, and yet preserve his dignity unspotted. It was easy enough for me, and if Walter had only let things alone immaculate where I fixed them, everything would have been all right. But he got talking his crazy French to the two guides in his boat all the way down the lake, and by the time they got astern of the Nelson point, I believe those men had made out that he wanted them to carry him up to the camp, and lay

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him as a burnt offering on the doorstep, while the others escaped by stealth with the venison. Grown-up people fuss and collaborate such a lot over things.

My boat ran up near Walter's once or twice, and I laughed to hear them all three talking together. The guides were *expliqué*-ing to each other in a sort of lightning jabber of which nothing un-French-Canadian can pierce the veil, when they do it their fastest. And then Walter would hold up his hand and say:

*"Attendez! N'importe, Alexandre. E'coutez moi, Véro. Vous êtes tort. Tout le monde sont tort, excepté moi. Je vous faites comprendre"*—and then he'd mix them worse than ever. I advised him to let them alone, but he sat on me hard, so I had to leave him to his fate.

My canoe went on ahead, according to arrangements. Dr. Nelson and Miss Margaret—I call her Margaret now, of course—were on the beach waiting for me when we ran ashore. I jumped out and shook hands. It was awfully funny—I tried to lift my cap, and found myself pulling my own hair, be-

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

cause I never wear a cap in the woods. Then I gave them the venison, and they liked it and asked if I shot it, which was an awkward experience. Then they invited us to stay to dinner, and I said:

"Oh, no! Couldn't possibly, thanks," and a vision occurred to me of Walter, in his one large, lonesome red trouser, waddling to dinner with Miss Margaret, and I gave a squeal.

Miss Margaret's keen, I tell you, and she knew something was wrong.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "What are you laughing at, Bob? Isn't that your brother in the canoe out there? We'll just see if he won't stay to dinner when he's asked."

I choked down my feelings and said, "We'll just see" after her, as politely as I could.

And then we were aware of sounds of vociferosity out on the lake and I turned around and there was the canoe, and Joe Véro and Alexandre, Walter's two guides, paddling as if they'd burst, and I guess they would have burst if they'd kept it up. They bent to their paddles till they scratched their noses



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on the gunwales, and the boat came spinning and leaping over the water like a scared duck. Never saw a boat come along like that in all my experience. And all the time Walter's voice was going steadily on in an excited monotony.

*"Vite, vite! Dépêchez vous! Pas assez! Allez! Venez!"* Then there would be a streak of English with some words in it I'll leave out in deference to my youth.

"Oh ——! *Can't* you—— idiots understand French? When I say *vite* I mean quick—turn quick. Oh, the —— Oh, it's too late! Get away—get out—into the lake—anywhere!" Then a pitiful, desperate moan, "*Have* I got to let these fools take me"—then breaking into French again: "*Vite, vite! Nous serai en retard! Vous êtes tort! Vite, oh, vite! Plus vite!*"

And of course the guides paddled more madly yet and you could hear the water swish before the boat.

I knew Walter wanted them to turn *au large* and was saying everything backward because he was so excited he had lost the little French he ever had,

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

yet I was so near death's door with choked-up laugh that I couldn't have said a word without rolling on the ground and shrieking. The Nelsons couldn't make out what the noise was about and stood stupefacted, and in a minute the canoe rushed in on a private tidal wave, the men panting and gasping and Walter sitting in the middle as mad as a hatter. We surrounded the boat, and the guides, breathing like porpoises, stepped out to hold it steady, and everybody looked at Walter. It was up to him to get out, but he sat stock still in the bottom in that ridiculous hot red blanket, his face about the same color, and a look of almost human misery in his glassy eyes.

"Well, Morgan, my boy, what's the difficulty? Won't you land and let us see a little of you?" said Dr. Nelson. That finished me. I lay down on the beach and rolled over and over and roared and squealed and cried and screamed out the pent-up passions of many hours. When I got so I could gasp and sob and choke a little and notice proceedings, they were watching me with a surprised sort of interest—except Walter, and it made me stop

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

laughing suddenly to see the way he looked. I believe he would have been glad to shoot me. They turned their attention to him when they saw my life was saved, and began urging him again to get out, and he declined with a snappish yet sickly firmness that made my flesh crawl. No. He couldn't. Positively couldn't. Yes. He killed the caribou. Yes. He was very happy, very. No. Hadn't time to tell about it. Would come up later. Must get back to camp. Important business—sorry. Must hurry—Véro!

The doctor struck in as Véro started to wade out to the stern.

"But, my dear boy, why are you wrapped in that great blanket this hot day? Are you ill?"

Walter gave a desperate, badgered look up at him.

"It's not hot, doctor. It's chilly, sitting in a boat," and he shivered vigorously. That seemed to me hypercritical.

"Chilly! My dear man, you've caught cold, you're ill. Chilly indeed! Chilly!" Dr. Nelson nearly had a fit. "Chilly! Margaret, love, run and get my

## THE LINGE OF M'SIEUR

medicine case. This youngster needs a dose of quinine."

Walter went on unintermittently saying he was all right, and had slept cold last night, and he felt perfectly well, and he was worn out hunting all night, and a few other impracticable inventions. The doctor shook his head pitifully at him, and in a minute Miss Margaret came jumping along with the medicine case, and my! but Walter looked sour swallowing down about a teaspoonful of quinine powder. Then the doctor said he must insist that the patient should throw off the blanket at once and walk up and down the beach till he was thoroughly warm. But there Walter turned at bay. He gave one maddened look at those guides and shouted:

"*Débarquez!*"

Which, of course, means "Get out." So they, being used to him, got in, and in about a second and a half Walter had executed a brief but eager farewell, and his canoe was *qu large*. I tried to be more deliberative and polite, but it's hard to sandwich your best behavior between chucklings, and I guess the Nelsons were dazed. Walter wouldn't talk very

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

pleasantly on the way home, and it seemed as if his spirit was broken. But as soon as he got some more trousers he felt better—it's wonderful what courage trousers give you.

That's about all. Walter seemed to be much estranged from Margaret at first when he got home, but they made it up in one of those mysterious ways that lovers have—with some sort of a whopper on Walter's part, I'll bet—which I think is very beautiful. And they got married the 14th of February, like a pair of mating birds, and I was the best man, which is the youngest one Walter or mother has ever heard of. That's all.

# **THE GRANDFATHERS OF BOB**



## THE GRANDFATHERS OF BOB

**F**OR a boy of thirteen I am very gifted in grandfathers, one of them being a bishop and one a judge. Walter says if there was another he'd likely be the President—Walter is my brother, you know, so he is *particeps criminis* in them. Which is out of Cæsar, and Walter says now I'm studying Latin my language is "such," but I think that's too severe. Anyway, to return to our grandfathers, I'm glad I have these, for they give me entire satisfaction. I have known them for years, of course, but I never felt that I knew the most occult thoughts of their hearts till they came to camp with us last summer in Canada. It was great to see how they improved mentally up there. They are both of a very sweet disposition naturally—at least the Judge is, and the Bishop fairly—but up in camp they got actually frisky and played jokes and went in swimming, and tried stunts like



## BOB AND THE GUIDES

chinning themselves and lassoing each other and a lot of really interesting things like that, instead of sitting in arm-chairs like most elderly gentlemen, talking about the warmth and the coolth, and politics and dead people, and acting way down in the pit of the dumps. In this state of preservation they were really a pleasure to have around camp, which is saying a heap for anybody.

I suppose it was on account of the good shape of their spirits that they got careless, and by osculating between right and wrong forgot their principles, and were led on by the broad and easy path to the destructions I am going to tell about, which I think were bang-up jokes and which other intelligent persons have considered worthy to be recounted.

Now although I have talked about my grandfathers *en masse*, I'd like you to understand that they are in reality very varied characters. The Bishop is like lightning at seeing funny things and saying them, and he can snap out two syllables of sarcasticness that will make the proudest wriggle. When he tells his views he does it quick and



And tried stunts.



## THE GRANDFATHERS OF BOB

hard, in little, short words, and people are always making a fuss over him and loving him, though he doesn't care at all, as he shouldn't, for that's all stuff and nonsense. But kids are crazy over him and come around kissing him, which to me is disgusting, and he is regarded by many, in fact, in the light of a dummy-god. But the Judge is different. He's more deliberative and is always in a good-humor, but never excited, and talks slower and uses longer words and doesn't chuckle as much. As to physique, both of them carry too much weight to be any good at track athletics.

Well now, you see, I remember just the way they talked at the lunch-table at the club-house, the day we went into camp. There were two other parties of *messieurs* going into the woods at the same time, and they were having contravertial discussions by the bushel over every sort of thing in association with woodship. Finally they got onto whether any of them would think it possible, in their wildest dreams, to kill caribou out of season. They chaffed a good deal pro and con, but the Judge was looking, for him, rather opprobrious, and after a while

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he couldn't choke off his soul any longer, and so he rolled it forth sonorously.

"Of course," he said, "I comprehend that you gentlemen, in conversation among yourselves, put forth a good many statements that are not seriously intended. All that is naturally immaterial and in the nature of amusement merely. But I feel it incumbent upon me to express my strong conviction as to the binding nature of the agreement under which we are members of this club. The law of the Province of Quebec provides that neither caribou nor moose shall be killed within the limits of that province before September 1st. In joining this sporting club we are under contract to keep that law to the letter; moreover we should each one consider himself responsible, not only for the preservation of the game, but for the moral example involved. I deem that the man who kills game out of season is guilty of a very grave offence, legally and morally." And Grandpapa jammed his lips together and looked solemn enough to stop ten large-sized clocks.

I got Walter to help me with some of the words

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in that speech. I get big words mixed sometimes, unconscientiously, but Walter says I have a noble ear for general picturesqueness, whatever that means.

Anyway, that's what Grandpapa said—the Judge. Then the Bishop said:

“Well, the Judge's rifle is laid off till the 1st, that's a sure thing. Edward, I'll have more potatoes. Judge, suppose a big buck should try to jump into your boat—would you set a moral example and let him? Or would you defend yourself and—perhaps not break, but we'll say sprain the law?”

But the Judge refused to be abducted into witicism. He looked very firm, though pleasant, and said, with aspersions: “I would keep the law, Bishop.”

Then Mr. Wade, who is an awfully large, stout, hearty character, with a thunderous voice that re-echoes from the vaulted roofs of wherever he is, shouted out:

“The Judge is all right, Bishop—he's a head of the law himself. Now it's your turn to voice your

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sentiments as a head of the church. You're not a hunter, but what about fishing on Sunday, when you get off into camp, where one day is exactly like another? Don't you think you might let yourself lose count a trifle some nice cloudy Sunday morning when the trout were rising well and the wind was good for casting? Tell us how you really feel about that, Bishop."

Well, now, dignity seemed to bristle right out of Grandpapa's flannel shirt-collar. He waited a second, with his eyes on his potatoes, and then he said, with a sort of a click, like a Maxim rapid-fire gun before it goes off:

"Mr. Wade, I have remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy a great many years. I am not likely to forget it now."

Mr. Wade shut up like a Jack-in-the-box, and there was a feeling in the air as if somebody had been a Smart Alex. And those two speeches of my honorary ancestors are the text of my ultimatum, which I shall continue to extract at more length.

The downfall of Grandpapa, the Bishop, was Walter's doing, and he did it, like the sirens, by

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singing. But, now, Walter's singing would give a siren a fit. He talks a tune at the top of his lungs, and when he gets the time about right he thinks he's singing. He likes it, personally, better than grand opera, and he has two especial tunes—if you can call them that—for mornings when he's dressing. For week-days it is "I Want to Be an Angel," and for Sundays, "Nita, Juanita." He says he reserves that for the Sabbath day because he considers his execution of it is superior. We had been about ten days in camp when an evil spirit entered into Walter one Sunday morning, and instead of singing "Nita, waw-haw-haw-anita, Ask thy soul if we must part," I heard, first, shrieks and yells as of a soul in pain—by which I knew he was finishing his bath and emptying a final bucket of cold spring water over himself—then a gigantic sigh of content, the agony being over, and then a peaceful bellowing of:

*I want to be an ange-eye-ell,*

*And with th' ange-eye-ells stand ;*

*A crown upon my fore-eye-head,*

*A harp within my hand-he-and-hand-hand-hand.*



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I shouted from my room "Hello, Walter! Where's Nita? Isn't it Sunday?" And as soon as he could put the brakes on the angels he shouted back:

"You young cuss, aren't you up yet? *Va-t-en!* Get down to the lake and swim yourself." He drives me into the lake every morning, even if it's cold as Hades, because he claims I don't use enough water for a bath; which is extremely unjust. I believe in water, of course, reasonably, and I just love to swim, but the daily tyranny of a bath I do hate.

Now the camp is a big log camp of four rooms, mine opening into Walter's, which is a sort of drawing-room to us, while the grandfathery, of two more rooms, is on the other side. So they can't hear what's going on very much. I walked into Walter's room when I got inconspicuously dressed, and disputed with him on the subject of music. "Don't you know it's Sunday?" I asked him.

"Be calm, my son," he said, all lathered over for shaving. "Everything is relative. It's not Sunday unless a certain combination of events occurs

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to make it Sunday. To-day, for good and sufficient reasons, it is not best that it should be Sunday. Didn't you hear me singing—wait, I'll do it again"—and in spite of my impassioned pleadings, he lifted his eyebrows till they scraped his front hair, beat time with his razor, and, all white and soapy as he was, burst forth cherubiously into

*I want to be an ange-eye-ell.*

Then he cocked his ear attentively toward the grandfatherly side of the camp.

"Do you think there's any chance they didn't hear that?" he said. "Because I could do it again."

But I remonstrated with him by a chunk in the chest, and he told me that "physical demonstration was distasteful to him," which he always says when I chunk him, but never when he chunks me. And then he began whispering, confidentially:

"Cub"—which is what he calls me—"it's a beautiful day for fishing and I can't bear to have the Bishop lose the chance. He loves it, and it's good for him, and to-morrow will make just as good a Sunday as to-day. Do you see, cub? It will

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be grand fishing on the Rivière Mouche Noire, and he will rake in the trout and be happy; and you can go over with him and keep dark. And it will be a great thing for the family if we can tell our children's children that their grandfather, the Bishop"—and Walter grinned so that the razor nearly cut him.

Of course a verbum sap is sufficient for me; so when the Judge came out on the gallery and said something, in a making-conversation tone, about it's being a "cloudy Sunday morning," I just hooted and remarked:

"Sunday, Grandpapa! Didn't you hear Walter singing 'I want to be an angel'?"

Then the Bishop opened his window, and called out, "What's that, man-cub? You say it's not Sunday," and I answered, precipitously:

"Walter didn't sing 'Nita, Juanita,' Grandpapa. How can it be Sunday?"

I heard a faint murmuring of, "A man needs to be more magician than musician to tell what Walter *is* singing," and then, in a few minutes, the Bishop came out with a flannel shirt instead of the white

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linen one which he wears on Sundays. Walter suggested the trip to the Mouche Noire at the breakfast-table.

"Better take your lunch and two guides," he said, "and you can have a long day's fishing. They come boiling in over there at the foot of the big chute. Bob will go with you and talk the language, so you needn't bother."

You see, I have to do all the decent French that's done in camp. I lived in Paris a year, in early life, so it's easy; but Walter speaks, as Grandpapa, the Bishop, says, "the worst and most fluent French in America." Not that the Bishop knows—he talks a studious sort that goes slow and laboriously, and he doesn't have many camp words. The Judge can say "*Bon jour*" and "*Oui*" when he's crowded, but he prefers to talk English loud and slow and very emphatically, and he considers that anything in human shape must understand him then, it's so plain. I heard him with his guide one day. He said, "Ouillette, if the provisions which I have ordered from the club should not arrive before the day after to-morrow, at what hour do you think it probable

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we should be able to leave for our exploring trip, or would you think it preferable to delay until the next day?"

Ouilette, who doesn't speak a word of English, giggled in a scared way, and murmured something about Beaupré, who is the Judge's other guide and knows some. But Grandpapa firmly, yet patiently, repeated all that, a little slower and louder. However, the Bishop can wriggle along rather better, only it irritates him if they don't understand. He is great on subjunctives, which I consider a curse in any language.

We got started for the Mouche Noire about ten, Walter hustling us off for fear somebody would tell Grandpapa it was Sunday. It was a clean, damp, cloudy sort of day, as nice in its way as sunshine, and bully for fishing. It was great on the portage; not too warm, you know, and there were wet, woodsy smells as you walked. Grandpapa jogged along in front with his hat and coat off, and I played he was an Indian, because his straight black hair was good for that, and stuck out. Now and then he would sit down on a log and rest, and

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look up at the sky through the trees, and say he loved to be in the woods. And pretty soon we'd see Olivier swinging silently up the trail with the *pacqueton* of lunch things on his back, and our rubber coats and rods; and then the canoe would come walking along like an ambulating giant mushroom, with Vézina's legs just showing under it. "Vison" the Bishop insisted on calling him, which means a mink; but Grandpapa only chuckled when I told him that, and asked Vézina why he stole trout so much, which embarrassed him a lot. The portage from our lake to the Rivière Mouche Noire is a mile long, but Grandpapa said it was a dog's mile; and when I asked him what that meant, he said, "Why, you lick a dog and make him run like everything, and when he dies it's a mile."

You never saw anything like the way the fish rose that day. Ever so many times we had two on together, and once Grandpapa landed three, one on each fly, and the largest one a pound and a half—we weighed him. Of course, they ran small, you see; they always do in those little rivers, but

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they made up for it in numerical power. Grandpapa crawled out on rocks and waded through pools in his yellow "*bottes sauvages*"—caribou boots, you know—and his face wore a circumambulant smile all day long. We could catch a lot, because there were eight guides and four *messieurs* in the camp, and Grandpapa said his guides should eat all the fish he caught if they had to get up at four in the morning to do it—that was what he paid them for.

We had lunch in a little birch and spruce grove right by the rapids, and the ground was brown and smooth with spruce needles, and the river rushed past in a great hurry, but talking quite low and politely, for it was a little rapids and not the great *chute*, and there was nothing to roar about. The "Vison" and Olivier made a fire and cooked trout and bacon and toast, and we had orange marmalade and "dog-biscuit," which Walter calls them, and everything tasted fine and Grandpapa ate like a gormand. Then we upped and at it again and fished till half-past five, when Vézina came and made gestures with his hands and his shoulders and

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all of his sacred person and said, in a soft, apologizing way that it was late, and that it was "*pas mal*" of a portage back, and that it "*faisait noir*" in the woods early, and that it was "*assez difficile*" for one to see with a boat on one's head, and didn't "M'sieur l'Évêque" think that we'd better—of course it was just as M'sieur wished—that we'd better start for home? Grandpapa stood there casting as if he hadn't heard a syllable, for about two minutes, and Vézina looked so scared and humble I was sorry for him; but you can't hustle the Bishop. Finally I cautiously said:

"What do you think, Grandpapa? Hadn't we better be going now?"

And Grandpapa answered, quietly: "Tell the mink I sha'n't leave for an hour."

The men understood and they looked discouraged and astonished, but I knew he was just fooling. So, sure enough, in a second the wrinkles began to come around his eyes the way they do when he smiles, and he said:

"*Vison, si j'iriez avec vous à ce moment je mouririez de chagrin. J'enverrais cinq coups de ligne*



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*encore, et alors—au revoir,”* and Vézina came up smiling.

And what do you think happened? You'd hardly believe it, but on the fourth "*coup de ligne*"—cast, you know—there was a swish and a rush through the water that brought my heart bang up against my front teeth, and the rod went over double and all our eyes nearly started out of our heads. Grandpapa looked as if his immortal soul and all his diosysan souls were on that fly—it was a Parmacheene Belle—and we just stood there breathless for ten minutes and watched him play the trout. It was a great fight, for the pool was small and there were holes under the rocks and an old log or two across, and the beast made for all of them and Grandpapa had to keep him out. He was a highly educated fish, and he knew what he wanted, which was to get that line around something and yank. But the Bishop played him well, I must say that for him, and when, after two crooshal moments, Vézina landed him high and dry, he gave a long sigh of relief—I mean the Bishop—and we all radiated with delight.

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"*Combien pese-t-il, Vison?*" asked Grandpapa, and Vézina weighed him and he was four pounds. I don't know what such a whopper was doing up in those rapids, but I guess he came up with the spring high water and forgot to go down.

Well, after that Grandpapa went back over the portage like a leaping kid, and at the first glimpse of the lake through the trees, he shouted: "*Thalassa! thalassa!*" in a peal of thunder. I don't know any Greek yet, but Grandpapa says that means: "The sea! the sea!" and that ten thousand men shouted it all together once, when they were in a bad hole of some sort and caught sight of the ocean. On somebody's retreat it was—I think Annabissy's. It's quite well known. The paddles whacked a joyful path across the lake, and when we ran in to the quay there were the Judge and Walter down on the edge of it to meet us, in very Sunday-looking clothes—white collars, you know. The Bishop pulled himself up out of the canoe with trouble, for I think he was pretty tired and stiff, but I'll bet he was the happiest and the dirtiest bishop that ever set spear in rest. He was

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streaked with black as far as mortal eye could see, and his hair was wet and glued on his forehead, and stuck out through a hole in his hat. He looked great, but not very bishopric.

"Any luck?" Walter called out as we came up, and then as the canoe ran alongside he looked in and he whistled. "Great Scott! You just brought the river along. *Vous sommes bon chanceux*," he said to Vézina. "*Combien de poissons est-ce que vous êtes attrapé.*" That's the way he talks French.

Vézina smiled like one beatified and told him the count—ninety-seven for the two rods—that is—well, I took only seventeen. I wasn't fishing very carefully anyway. But many of them rendezvoused in me at supper. They admired Grandpapa's big one, in congress assembled, and then he caught sight of the white collars.

"What are you two in 'biled shirts' for?" he said. "I didn't wire you I'd taken a four-pounder, did I?"

Walter stuck his hands in his pockets and his eyes got moist from inner laughing, the way they have, and you could just see him gloating before he spoke a word. Then he said, rather softly:

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“We thought it only proper, Bishop, that we at least should remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. We also thought it likely you would read the service for us this evening—it is Sunday, you know—the twelfth Sunday after Trinity.”

Grandpapa looked from one to another of us dumfoundedly; then somehow he knew it was so, and he gave one glare at the lot as if he'd like to kill us and stalked sternly and arrogantly past to his room. Well, I thought Grandpapa, the Judge, would certainly fall off the dock laughing. He roared and shook till he had to hold on to a tree, and when he got up on the gallery in a chair he burst out laughing all over again every little while. And now and then he'd gasp out:

“It wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for what he said at the club about remembering—remembering”—and his voice would jiggle—“the—the Sabbath-day to keep it—oh! keep it holy. But I can't forget”—and then he'd have another attack.

Well, Grandpapa, the Bishop, decided to forgive us, because he was so tickled with his big catch and his four-pounder that he couldn't stay mad, but I

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think he preserved a state of some rancorousness at the Judge, who bothered him inhumanely. But fate revenged his woes. We broke camp unexpectedly, August 25th, and Walter and I were both awfully disgusted that we were not to get any hunting, and Walter said—though it sounds exaggerative to me—that he felt sorry, most of all, because the Judge would be done out of his chance too. The Bishop doesn't hunt. But the Judge had a new rifle, a 40-30 smokeless Winchester, and he was tickled to death with it and kept the guides busy putting tomato-cans on floats out in the lake, for targets. He was a fair shot too, though casualistic about whether he hit the guides or not, and they were deadly afraid of him. He couldn't wait to fire till they got away from the tomato-cans. So you see it did seem too bad to drag him out of camp without killing anything at all, even a guide. But he was fine about it, as he always is, and said he didn't mind in the least, and that very likely he wouldn't hunt if we stayed till the 1st, and all those remarks people make when they are kind-hearted but untruthful.

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It was lovely weather the morning of the twenty-fifth, and, when the procession got under way, with eight guides, and four *messieurs*, and mountains of *pacquetons* pushing the four canoes deep in the water, I looked back at the dear, old, pretty, log camp, where we had such good times, and could have cried. It makes you feel awfully homesick to leave a camp that has been full of people and noise all by itself in the woods—it looks so lonely. We paddled three miles down the lake before we came into the Mousse River, where we had five miles to go. The first four were uneventless, but then something happened. Just as my canoe, which was second in line, was rounding a rocky point, we caught sight of the Judge's, which was ahead, behind a beaver-meadow that ran out into the water. And what was the strain on my feelings to see, on the other side of the grass and hidden from Grandpapa, a great caribou sliding silently along the edge of the marsh, stopping every minute or so to feed. He didn't see the boats, and Vézina, in the stern of Grandpapa's, waved his hand furiously to us to keep back—he had seen Mr. Caribou, you

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know, and had sneaked behind the point to let him get nearer. So we dropped very quietly down to a fallen tree that lay out on the water, and held on to it, and waved back the other boats.

Then I turned to watch the game, and what was my astonishment to behold Grandpapa, the Judge, sitting in the middle of his boat, pulling his rifle out of its case as fast as hands could pull. Then Vézina, who had been fussing with the fish-basket, leaned forward and gave him something, and I couldn't believe my sorrowful eyes, when I grasped that it was cartridges, and that he was loading the "*carabine*." Vézina slid the paddle into water again, and out the boat slipped from cover, almost on top of the caribou, who had been walking steadily along the other side of the point to meet it. He wasn't fifty yards away. Then a "bang-bang" rent the evangelical stillness, and the caribou jumped sideways, scared green, but with his tail up, and in splendid health. Grandpapa put the rifle down and looked, eagerly and fiercely, and there was his friend, the enemy, in an awful pet, but no holes in him. Then the rifle went up savagely to the

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judicial shoulder, another bang profaned the forest shades, and what should that poor, half-witted caribou do but jump into the water for all he was worth, and swim for the canoe. Perhaps he thought that the nearer the gun the safer the meat—but Grandpapa didn't like it when I suggested that. I really think he lost his mind from an attack of nerves, and just wanted to get into deep water and cross the river. Anyway, Grandpapa sat right down in his earthworks and cannonaded that skedaddling foe. He fired seven times, and he didn't hurt anything but his thumb, which he got under the hammer the last time, in his excitement.

When we debarked at the portage we were all of us subdued and respectful, except the Bishop, and I must say, if he is my grandfather, that his joy wasn't decent. His eyes danced with wickedness, and he jumped out of the canoe as fast as I could, and came right over to Walter and said, without a glance at the Judge:

"It wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for what he said at the club; but I can't forget about the binding nature of the agreement under which we are



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members of this club." Then he went off into a heartfelt whoop-and-chuckle mixture that must have been wearing on the Judge's sweet disposition, and when he stopped it was only to say, with a gulp: "Oh, my! The moral example! Oh, my!"

It's a horrid feeling to miss a shot—as I have experienced already in my career—even if you have, as is almost always the case, magnificent reasons. But Grandpapa had missed seven, and he hadn't any reason at all, and his thumb was bleeding like sixty. Which proves that simply not to have torn us in shreds was the act of a hero and a gentleman.

When we got to the club there was Mr. Wade again, and the first thing at the dinner-table he shouted out, as if we were across a lake:

"Well, Bishop, I suppose you kept the Sabbath, and the Judge kept the law, according to your programme?"

My two grandfathers sneaked a look of maidenly shyness at each other, and the only thing that broke the ominous silence was a choking sound from Walter.

**THE FOX'S UNDERSTUDY**



## THE FOX'S UNDERSTUDY

**O**F course I'm only a small boy. That's drummed into me forty times a day, and anyway I know it. It's one of the facts they call self-evident, and, like all of those, a shameful thing. I suppose I've got as good a chance of being a centurion, in time, as any American citizen, yet it's constantly being thrown in my teeth that I'm only thirteen and a small boy. But it isn't my fault, and I have feelings, and also if I'm badly treated I get even when I can. This story is about one of the times when I could. I heard my sister Margaret remark—she's my sister-in-law, but I like her, and Walter says it gives the impression of a united family, so I call her sister—I heard her say hell had no fury like a woman scorned. Well, now, I'd like to tell you that if they want another fury just as good, they had better look around among the small boys

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scorned. It was my cousin Reggie that scorned me, but he won't again.

Reggie is twenty-six years old, which is a great advantage. But what I sustain is that it's mean to be rubbing it in all the time that I'm a kid. After all, the very greatest men have gone through the same trouble and come out unskinned. I think that the comparative values of ages is an important study, and one well worth the attention of the most learned scavengers. But I'm not writing about that. I'm writing about a tragedy that I cooked, and brought to a glorious terminus, and the way it all began was by unjustly chasing me off the tennis-court. I was playing with Dick Ely, who is quite a large and old boy of fourteen, and out pranced my cousin Reggie with that girl he's crazy over, Miss Annie Cary. Reggie didn't waste a minute on politeness, or to say, "Finish your set, boys," or any little extravaganza of that sort. Not he. We boys are used to being second class; we'd have gone quietly if he'd given us half a chance; but he didn't. He just fell over himself shouting:

"Clear the deck for action, children! Great inter-

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national tennis tournament about to begin! Hurry up and get your things out of the way, boys—we don't want to wait." Now the set stood five to four, and I had Dick forty-love on the game, and I'd never got a set from Dick. You can see if that wasn't exciting. I stopped with my racket up to serve, and said, as politely as I knew how:

*"Could you wait till we finish this set, Reggie? It won't take more than five minutes."*

Miss Cary was decent, I'll say that for her, and she jiggled her eyes and pushed down her belt, the way she does, and peeped out: "Oh yes! Let them finish. Pray do! I'm in no hurry."

But Reggie waved his racket around his head and insisted: "Nonsense! They would take hours! I won't have you imposed on—you are too sweet and gentle. Get out, boys!"

My brother Walter says a gentleman is to be treated as such irrespectful of age, and he does it. But Reggie seems not to have been instructed in that maxiom. We picked up our balls and walked off the court with silent yet boiling hearts. Dick

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Ely is quite old, you know, and he was my guest, and it embarrassed me a lot. He went home, but I was so angry I couldn't walk, and I dropped on a bench under a tree by the court and picked up a magazine some one had left, and apparently read. But I watched their foolish playing and sizzled with madness. I didn't know a word I read, and all I thought of was how to get even. Now if you're mad enough, and think hard, you can usually get your enemy delivered into your hand, as is shown in *Stalky and Co.* My mother, not having read it, gave me that book, but I don't consider it, and Walter doesn't, a model for every-day conduct, yet some of its points gave me ideas that day. In about fifteen minutes their great international tournament began to run down—they can't either of them play—and they stopped longer and longer, and talked over the net each time. The first thing I noticed was Miss Cary saying:

“Be careful! That youngster may hear.”

And Reggie answered: “No danger. He's only an infant. He's thinking about his blocks and mud pies.”

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That mollyfied me, perhaps you think. "Blocks and mud pies," and I thirteen! My blood boiled at such unjustness, but I sat all the stiller, with my eyes glued on that magazine upside down. They were arranging something Reggie seemed awfully keen about.

"I must see you to-morrow," he said. "I can't get through the day without you." Now did you ever hear anything as idiotic as that? But that's what he said, though I don't blame anybody who won't believe it. Miss Cary chewed the top of her racket and looked pleased.

"Is it just that old Hunt Club meet?"

"That's all," said Reggie, "but it takes the whole bloomin' day. And they must have me because I've had experience here and in England, and they want me to get their baby Hunt Club going. You see, it's their first ride with the hounds." Reggie was putting on airs—I knew that. But Miss Cary said, "Oh!" and looked very respectful, and Reggie went perambulating on: "I wonder if I couldn't cut some of it? I wonder if I couldn't lose them, perhaps? Or be taken ill and have to leave them? Jove!"



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He stopped as if he'd struck something in that large, resounding, empty cavern he calls his mind. "I have it! We lay the scent in the morning, and I'll see that it goes near your place, and when we're riding in the afternoon I'll be ill and start back for home, and then branch up the other road to the Manor. That's it. It's all right. I won't have to go through another long, lonely twenty-four hours without you." I almost dislocated my left eye trying to watch them, and I saw him grab her hand. What the fun is in that I can't imagine, but it's done a good deal. Even Walter—but Margaret will kill me if I circumscribe those events. Anyway, as I cocked one eye up and saw them being silly, the outlines of the stirring deed that was to be my just revenge flashed upon me.

Our Hunt Club is brand-new—only four months old—and the single iota I have against it is that I am not in it. Age limit, as usual. It's a regular scourge, this being young. But I'm riding my pony and practising a lot, so as to be able to go in the minute I'm eighteen, and Walter says I could keep up with the push right now. They have only two

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hounds as yet, and those don't appear to be certain what they're for, but the M. F. H. says that they will learn all right if we'll give them time. The ride to which my cousin Reggie was planning to be a deserter was the first in which the club were to follow the hounds, and the question was if they could get the hounds to go in front. But the M. F. H., who in my opinion is a cracker-jack, and got up this whole affair, and does all the work—the M. F. H. said he reckoned they would. So he and Walter procured a fox from two boys who trapped him. Now when Margaret heard there was a fox, she had a fit, and said how cruel, and she didn't believe she would ride. But the M. F. H. said, "Bless you, Mrs. Morgan, no cruelty about it; this fox has got to last two years." So there was a laugh on Margaret.

The plan was this: the Highs and Mightys of the club, which was the M. F. H. and Walter and Reggie and a groom, were to take Brer Fox in the morning and lead him by a string over the course they'd laid, and then shut him up safely in a farmer's pig-pen, and come back and hunt him

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

with the hounds. They talked it all over and over at dinner, and I listened and thought adjacent thoughts of my own. Reggie made himself still more beloved to me by saying before all the family,

“Too bad our little tootsy-wootsy Bobby can’t go, but he must stay home and play horse with the baby till he gets bigger.”

I suppose he thought he was propounding a witticism. But I smiled an icelated smile to myself as I thought of his approaching ruins.

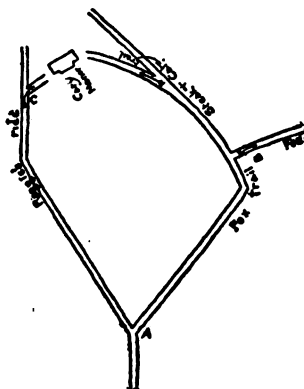
When they started out with the fox next morning I was on my pony, and hovered on their flank and deployed after them, away behind. But the M. F. H. saw me and wigwagged me to come up, and called out, when I was near enough:

“Come along, Bob. You’re as good a sport as anybody. Glad to have you ride with us.”

He *is* a cracker-jack, you know. And he wears russet boots. He’s stunning on a horse. I heard him say to Walter, “That young chap rides well.” How different the world would be if all men were like that!

## THE FOX'S UNDERSTUDY

They trotted Foxy over the course they had arranged, and this was it:



You'll see how it is if you look at it hard. Two roads run around Cary Manor farm, and the course followed the one to the right—A B—as far as B, and then led away at a right angle. That angle I chose as the turning-point of my manoeuvre (though I'm not quite sure that word is spelled right). I thought this campagne out like a general, I tell you that. And if some generals would take the same trouble they wouldn't have had to fuss so long with those Boers. It's work and intelligence that get there I know that from experience. You'll see.

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

After I'd seen the fox led over the course—and it was some trouble—I lost the others around the turn in a road, and took a short-cut to Cary Manor. The cook there was our house-maid two years ago, and she's crazy about me—you know women get these fads. However, she's a sort of matron saint of mine, and I go to see her at times, and also she makes goluptious ginger cookies. I shunted Issa-char, the pony, into the stable and made for the kitchen, and there was Mary as eggstatic as ever and overflowing with cookies. I ate a few to soften her, and then I said, just to lead up to the subject,

“Mary, where's Tomasino?”

That's the Carys' big cat. Mary looked under the table and gave a sort of whistle—it's queer girls can't whistle without groaning an accompaniment—and out stalked old Tomasino, big and fat and lazy.

“There's the pretty Bird of Paradise, the brute,” ejackulated Mary. “He's been afther eatin' two of me quail for dinner, and Tim's got to drop wurrk an' ride to town for more, all along of his Highness' appetite.”

## THE FOX'S UNDERSTUDY

I took another ginger cooky, and I said, "Mary, I'll get the quail if you'll lend me Tomasino for a while."

But Mary is a suspicious character, and she sniffed something. "What are ye wantin' of the cat, thin, ye young limb—I mean Misther Bobby, dear? Ye'll be up to some divilmint—I know ye, thin, bless ye," and she looked tickled to death to think how wicked I was. But I got Tomasino by dint of eating cookies, and Mary promised not to tell the family, and a sweet time I had with him when we both arrived on Issachar. Tomasino is a strikingly poor horseman, and he scratched and he squealed and he wriggled, and also Issachar seemed to know it was the chance of his life to be unpleasant, and went like a locomotive jumping fences, and pulled till I thought sadly of that text of Scripture—"Issachar is a wild ass bending beneath two burdens." It was the work of two men to hold on to the cat and hold on to the reins, but I did it, and landed all three of us beasts in the wood by the angle of the road—see B on map. Then I deduced from my pocket a long, strong

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

cord, one end of which I tied to Tomasino's fancy brass collar, and the other to a tree. If you ever saw an insulted cat! It was a lesson in bad language to hear him miaouw. So I left the elegant Tomasino, tied in a wood by a pirate crew, and waiting he knew not what desperate fate, and galloped home to lunch. Before enjoying that "sweet restorer" I had one business engagement, which I did, namely, I went to the ice-box, considered the contents, and helped myself to a large chunk of steak which lay on a plate. I stuffed it into my coat pocket, as it was not destined to be eaten by human jaw, and as wrapping it up seemed nonsense. But simple as that act appears, it was the cause of peril to the whole gigantic operation. In fact, lunch was very vicissitudinous. First the dogs came snuffing around me and wouldn't be driven off. There is the baby's dachshund, and my fox-terrier, and old Wullie, the Irish setter, and all three of them were jumping on me so that everybody at the table noticed it. I thought the brutes were crazy at first, but suddenly the memory flashed over me of that steak in my pocket. Of

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course I couldn't explain, so I simply had to keep on kicking the dogs, and it left very little time for eating. As fast as they were turned out, they would come in again with the servants, and make a bee-line for me and begin that joyous, eager snuffing. Then suddenly mother exclaimed:

"Why, Bob, what on earth have you been doing to your hands?" And everybody looked at them.

It was Tomasino, you know—he'd scratched them pretty much all over. I said, carelessly:

"Oh, that's nothing. That's a cat I was—I was inspecting."

And Margaret rejoindered, "You must have inspected him quite thoroughly. I should say, at a guess, that you'd been taming tigers."

Well, that subsided, thank goodness, but all the time the dogs were snuffing and I was kicking. And in a minute the butler came in very hurriedly and whispered something to mother, and mother said, "For mercy's sake!" and looked thunder-struck, and of course everybody stopped talking and stared at her. "Awful catastrophe," exclaimed mother. "The baby's steak has disappeared."



## BOB AND THE GUIDES

"Feed him this," suggested Walter.

"Cold duck and salad—for a baby!" said mother scornfully, and everybody laughed at Walter, though I'll bet they didn't know the difference.

Now it makes me mad to see the way they spoil that baby. He's four years old, and he has to have steak, steak, steak, and potatoes, potatoes, potatoes, till it's enough to ruin the family. There he was yelling bloody murder up in his nursery so you could hear him all over, just because he couldn't get his dinner as usual. Why can't he deny himself sometimes and improve his character? I think overeating is a mistake, and he simply stuffs, every day. It does him good to go without for once. But it made me nervous to have the dogs snuffing and the butler complaining and the baby crying and all this fuss over nothing, so I said I wasn't hungry and got up to leave. No pleasure in a meal like that. And, as I got up, of course my cousin Reggie had to have a dig—we can all do something to make others a little happier.

"What *have* you got in your pocket, Bob?" he asked in his horrid, airy way—like a perfect lady,

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you know. "Watermelon, or apple pie? Ugh! you're all moist." I'd just touched his hand in passing. "Go to your nurse, child, and be dried out."

I thought I'd stop and choke him, the first second, and then I suddenly remembered what I had on ice for him, and I whooped with joy, and skedaddled, for fear I'd tell.

The meet was at half past two, so I went straight and mounted Issachar. As I trotted past the piazza they were coming out from lunch, and I pulled up and called, "Reggie, you're going to follow the hounds too, aren't you?"

Reggie said, "Oh yes, I suppose so, though I'm feeling rather seedy. I'll start with the meet, anyway." Then I knew what his plans were.

Walter stuck his hands in his pockets and gazed at me thoughtfully.

"Why, cub?" he inquired, but I didn't answer, and as I cantered away I heard him remark, "That cub has something up his sleeve."

I was glad it wasn't up my sleeve; it was clammy and horrid enough in my pocket.

I stopped for Mary's quail and put them in the

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other pocket, so that I was like a travelling butchery, and then I rode on to my rendezvous with Sir Tomasino in the wood. I don't suppose most people have any idea how difficult it is to anchor a chunk of steak to a cat's tail. The trouble is in the tail—it wags so. If there had been two of me, one could have held the tail, but, being sole, I tried all kinds of ways. I put my foot on it, and gripped it between my knees, and knelt on it, and after a while I took it in my teeth, and that tasted nasty. I was scratched to imitate a map of Europe, mountains and rivers and all complete. But I got the meat on tight, and Tomasino was under the impression that I'd put his dinner on the wrong end through ignorance. He was as crazy for that meat as the dogs. I suppose he was hungry. Did him good. I could see the road for a mile towards town, and pretty soon I saw a bunch of flies, which they looked like, moving up it. They stopped a second near where the turn was that went around the other side of Cary Manor farm, and I knew Reggie was explaining how his head ached and he would have to leave them, and how awfully sorry he was, but

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to hurry on and not lose the dogs—I could imagine just how he was stuffing them, with that perfidious untruthfulness which is so shining a characteriskit of my cousin Reggie. Then the bunch of dots came tearing towards me, and my fancy's eye squinted around the corner and saw the traitorous Reggie galloping up the other road to a long, quiet afternoon, as he expected, with the lady he couldn't live without. But I hadn't much time for fancy eyes now, for behold! it was the turning-point of my destiny. I could see the dogs plainer every second, racing straight for me. The real fox trail lay around an angle, you remember (see B on map), and I knew that my chance was in mixing them as they turned the corner. So, cat in hand, I crouched on the town side of the road, where the hunt was coming, and, like the other heroes at Bunker Hill, I waited till I could see the whites of their eyes. Only pups don't have any whites. Then, with a screech and a whack, I let loose the horrified Tomasino bang in front of the yelling pack, and waited for glory or despair. Glory it was—first-class glory. The wind was towards the

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hounds, and they sniffed the meat, and as Tomasino fled three-cornered up the road, they went crazy with excitement, jumped clean over the old fox trail, and fled after him on the steak trail, without a second's break. Tomasino made a bee-line, as I thought he would, for the Carys' happy home, and dogs and riders followed like a quotation from Sir Walter Scott—"The chase swept up the sylvan glen." I retired to Issachar, tied in the wood, and as I watched from my border fortress, it reminded me again of the "Lady of the Lake":

*An hundred dogs bayed deep and strong ;  
Clattered an hundred steeds along ;  
Their peal the merry horns rang out ;  
An hundred voices joined the shout.*

But the most really descriptionous part was,

*Far from the tumult fled the roe [Tomasino]  
Close in its covert covered the doe [me],*

I cowered closer as Walter came up with the M. F. H. and gave a glance toward the forest depths where Issachar and I lurked. My, but the M. F. H.

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is a stunner on a horse! Did I say before that he wears russet boots?

The riders were quite far back of the dogs because of the stop with Reggie, and there was some delay and calling out about losing the scent and the wrong course, when they came to the angle where the fox had turned and the dogs hadn't. I felt my fate swaying in the ballunce, but the M. F. H. shouted out to "Follow the hounds," so they all went piling up the road after Tomasino.

Then I jumped on Issachar and took a short-cut I knew across the fields, and as I got near the Manor House there issued out a hullabaloo. It was like Dante's Infernal. There was snarling and shouting and barking and laughing at the top of the lungs of man and beast, as if the lily and the rose strove for the mastery. It seems that Tomasino had made for the library door which opens on the big piazza, and Reggie and Miss Cary, who were spooning in there, heard his miaouwing and scratching and opened the door, and the dogs came up about then and the foremost riders soon after, and the tangle was awful. When I got there it was

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something like this: the door was wide open and people were jumping off horses and tying them to posts and rushing inside, and as I did the same I caught sight, at the far end of a volcanic-struck room, enthroned on the high mantel-piece, and beleaguered by shrieking, jumping dogs, of the distracted Tomasino, mad and scared and trying to get a warlike wiggle on his steak tail. Miss Cary was saying "Pretty doggie! Here, pup!" and whistling sort of weak sounds at the dogs, who, meantime, were filling the air with deafening screechings, and leaping like rubber balls at the spitting Tomasino. Everybody else was drooping over chairs and clinging to walls, limp and helpless with laughing. Only Reggie, and his voice could be heard in interstices through the din, explaining and explaining why he was there. He had got behind a chair in a corner, as if to protect himself, and while the dogs danced and yelled, he steadily addressed first Walter, then the M. F. H., then Margaret, then any person who looked at him.

"I lost my way," I heard him say once, "and the road was turning—and turning. And I—" Then

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the dogs drowned him. Next time I caught a word, he was saying,

"There was a runaway, and I rode after them, hoping to be of some assistance, and suddenly to my great surprise I found myself at Cary Manor gate, and so—" The dogs took up the tale.

And once again I gasped with astonishment to hear him announce, in a second of comparative quiet, that he had seen from far, far away, smoke issuing in masses from hereabouts, and had ridden like mad to warn the Carys. Walter stopped laughing and spoke up then:

"Reggie, for Heaven's sake be still. When you have settled on a story, stick to it, but I'd stop now, if I were you."

Reggie stopped, and a more sheep-fallen man of twenty-six I never saw.

After a while they got the dogs out, and then Mary came in from the kitchen and coaxed down poor old Tom. When she had him safely in her arms, she leaned over and examined his anchor, which the baby wouldn't have wanted to eat, by now.



## BOB AND THE GUIDES

"Oh, wurra, wurra!" she said. "The sufferin' baste! 'Tis a fine Hunt Club ye have, huntin' me cat!" Then she looked up quick. "Where's that b'y? Where's that limb? 'Tis his wurrk this."

I'd made myself immotional in a dark corner, but I happened to remember the quail. I extradited them from my pocket hurriedly.

"Here, Mary," I said. "Give these to Tomasino, and maybe he'll feel better."

They all laughed some more, and I was feeling quite cocky, but I wasn't to get off so easily. The M. F. H.—and I like him, you know—said in his gentle sort of deep voice:

"Well, Bob did this trick—that's plain. And I'll have to forgive him, because he's a friend of mine, and because he's Bob. But I'm a good deal disappointed about the run, and I would like to know why Bob did it."

I tell you I felt mean and sorry; I never thought about disappointing the M. F. H. I tried to slink off, but Walter got me by the ear, and I finally had to explain. I said:

## THE FOX'S UNDERSTUDY

"I'm sorry about the run. I wouldn't spoil the M. F. H.'s fun for anything. *He* treats me like a gentleman. I was only just getting even with Reggie. Reggie chased Dick Ely and me off the tennis-court, and I could have beaten Dick Ely in two minutes, if Reggie had let us play it out. So I was bound I'd get even, you see. And I heard Reggie planning to sham sick on the ride and come here to spoon Miss Cary, and I thought I'd show him up—" Then they all howled at me and stopped me. But I managed to annex, "I'm awfully sorry about spoiling the run."

The M. F. H. came up and shook hands and said "All right, Bob," and Walter said I was a "young cuss," so I knew they didn't mind much. Margaret took me by the collar and shook me a little, which is so much pleasanter than kissing, and means the same thing, and then she suddenly hopped up on a chair and waved her crop and called out "Listen!"

And they all stopped talking and did, and there she stood in her riding-habit like a clergyman in a black gown.

"I want to point a moral." And then she turned

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and looked straight at Reggie. "Don't abuse the helpless, because they may not be helpless. And besides, it's mean. And also, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you'—especially small boys."

**PLACE AUX DAMES**



## PLACE AUX DAMES

**I** WANT to begin by saying a few words about Woman. As I am now fourteen years old and carefully educated, I am calculated to pay a tribute to that gentle sect, and I have confidence in it in many ways. My father pointed out to me long ago—in March, I think, it was—that it seemed as if you were hard up for something to be proud of if you were proud of being a man, because that's very general. He said it was a sure sign of a weak spot if a man felt himself strong on those grounds, and a sure sign of a small streak if he got feeling so big he had to make slurring speeches about women. He said it was adapted to make the ladies' blood boil also, and that's not a nice thing to do to any one. So you see from that I'm trained to be fair. Also, I know that by nature a woman shoots straighter than a man, for a crack shot said so: and I heard some polo-players and horsemen

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saying how women could ride better nineteen times out of twenty, and ride animals men couldn't, because their hands are lighter. They certainly have their good points. So you see I'm broad-minded. About my sister Margaret, now. Well, she's a sport, and I never expect to ride a horse the way she does, for she's got the sure, swinging seat that's a gift to one in a thousand, and her hands are a wonder—she plays the thing's mouth like playing the piano, and any old wild beast comes into line under her. So there. I'm going to give the devil her due. But all the same, it does come more natural to men and boys to do hunting, and they can kill things more easily and more ruthlessly also, and it's seldom you hear of ladies getting big game when they haven't the help of one masculine person. So I feel it's only just to myself to tell the true account of how, in spite of her many virtues, it was owing to me that Margaret got her first caribou.

My brother Walter is a guy. Almost all the pleasure he has in life he gets from the practice of guying this or that one, and if nobody else

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thinks it funny, he always does, so it is a great amusement and research for him. Of course one of the least inconvenient persons a man can *guy* is his wife, so Margaret enjoys the full riches of it. She doesn't mind, for she just snaps her fingers or says "silly" or some other light explosive; or else she *guys* him back again about the weaknesses of his career, which are many, such as French. She usually quiets him a good deal that way.

The day I have in consideration was up in our camp in Canada, where I was spending a month with Margaret and Walter. Walter was getting the best of it that day, for it was about shooting that he was extenuating, and Margaret certainly had missed a caribou most fully. Nobody but Godin the guide and her own soul knew the rights of it, but the story had begun with that caribou a hundred and fifty yards away and almost hidden by bushes and on the keen jump, and every time we asked her about it she took off a few yards and cleared out a few underbrushes from the force of conscience, till Walter said he was afraid we'd step on him



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pretty soon. But she kept him jumping—she wouldn't abate a jot or a tittle on that.

Godin and Margaret had started out the morning of September 1, when the hunting season begins, at the snappy hour of six o'clock, and by nine they had walked five miles,—which, I assure you, is walking, for I've done it. You kerswash through boggy marshes where the grass is two feet high and the mud is one foot low, and every time you lift a leg the bog sucks it back, and you're soaking to your knees from the grass, and weigh tons extra. It's pretty, though, for when the sun gets up there are lots of spider-webs with dew-drops on them shining, and it looks like lace and diamonds over everything. Then it's so clean and so still that you feel as if the world was just made, and you and your guide were the only people in it, as you go chunking through the mud. When you get into the woods there is a Christopher Columbus emotion of discovery, and at every twist of the portage wonderful adventures seem more probable to happen. It looks and feels so exactly the way you like things that it seems as if millions

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of fairies had gotten it ready and then cleared out to let you enjoy it. I love the way it's spotted with moving lights and shadows, and all tangled up deeper and deeper as you look, so you can't tell where anything begins or ends, and any black log a little way off might be a caribou, and jump up and go crashing away into the mix-up. It makes me hungry to remember the woods.

Well, it was that sort of thing Margaret was walking through. Neither she nor Godin had peeped a word for an hour, when they came out from a portage on a little lake that was solid marsh half-way down one side of it. Big bushes were scattered thick, and there were runways crisscrossing all over the place, and some good fresh signs. Godin stooped and put his hand into one, and grinned back at her as he stood up and showed her how big it was; and Margaret says she sneaked like a mouse down that marsh, and her skirt was so sopping it didn't make a sound in the grass, and there wasn't a breath, only the little gurgle as the water ran back when they lifted their feet out of their tracks. All the same, suddenly she heard a

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guides and two boats, the three of us, up the Rivière Sauvage. Walter decided he wouldn't hunt that day, but would go along for the trip.

It was good and early when we started—about five—and the canoes slid off the dock into wet mist, and odds and ends of it were curling all over the lake, and the breeze caught it and tossed it around. Everything was grayness, and the treetops stuck through, black and solid, for the sun wasn't up yet. Margaret got into the bow of her canoe with a paddle, and as ours slipped past she turned her head and laughed at me, for she was saying some verses we both like, about—

*“ He is off to the hills of the morning,  
By the dim, untrodden ways ;  
In the cool, wet, windy marshes,  
He has startled the deer agraze.”*

And I knew she was thinking about the cool, wet marsh where she had startled one agraze, with a large lot of sickening jokes on her tied to his tail.

We paddled and we portaged, and we paddled

## PLACE AUX DAMES

and we portaged some more, up that rapidsy little river, and about six-thirty we came out on its head waters, Lac Sauvage. By this time there was large flat sunshine over the lake, but in the woods it was darkish yet, and only the tips of the spruces had caught any brightness. It was bully hunting—just the hour when a caribou might be stealing down to drink at any old pool in a corner. So we shipped the paddles and ourselves without a sound, and Margaret's boat slipped ahead like a fish through the lake, now and then shining in a splash of sun, and now and then hidden in a curl of mist that the sun had forgotten to melt.

Straight opposite from where we came in, across two miles of water, another little river flowed into Lac Sauvage. It hadn't any name—just the Lac Sauvage inlet. We headed for that. I was to hunt there *en canot*, paddling quietly up and down, for it had good marshes along it where beasts were apt to feed. Margaret was to go on a mile, and then leave the boat and walk through the woods to a little pond called Lac Cœur, because it was the shape of a heart. All the borders of it were cut up

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

and stamped brown like roads, with caribou trails—it was a splendid lake to hunt. I gave Margaret the best place, but of course I was glad to, she being a lady—and then, as Walter said, it really was Margaret's hunt, anyway.

After lingering around for a while, we started up the little river, I in the bow with my rifle, Vézina paddling, and Walter "worshipping nature," he said, in the middle of the boat. The water was deep enough to run easily even with three, but it was snaggy, because hardly anybody ever came here, and the wood was never cleared away.

Well, I sat in the bow, as silent as death, watching keenly with a wary hunter's eye this side and that, and listening with an ear well trained to the silences of the forest. Vézina paddled, and we slid mysteriously along the shores.

When all of a sudden the boat went smack on a rock with a bang, and instantly, before my brain cleared from the shock, just ten feet in front of me, from a little island covered with tall grass, there was a wild jump and a rush and a swish—and then a flash of large blackness with great forks

## PLACE AUX DAMES

to it bounded up and down, up and down through the dazzling waving of the grass. You can't imagine how bewildering it was to see it, or how stunned I was with the two things coming together. Then the boat ricocheted with another crash on a snag, and Vézina whispered in a blood-curdling hiss—as if there was anything to whisper about—

*"Un car-r-ribou! C'est un car-r-ribou, M'sieur Bob!"*

Maybe I thought it was a muskrat!

It was all very dizzying, and a great strain, but I did the best I could, and I did it calmly. I stood up in the boat so as to see better, and cocked my rifle and fired. But I had bad luck. The standing up would have been all right, only Walter wriggled—or something—and that whirled my gun around violently, so the shot didn't seem to touch the caribou, but, instead, the recoil kicked me in the shoulder, and—I perhaps winced, and—anyway, the boat turned over.

Of course we all went into the water—but what's a wetting now and then? It seemed to me, and it seems so still, that Walter made an undue rum-

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pus over it. He didn't at first, for he was very busy. He went clean to the bottom, five feet or so, and probably he worshipped some nature down there, for he was down quite a while. But inside of five minutes we were all crawling out on a rock high and dry—that is, the rock was dry. And the first thing Walter said I had to laugh. He looked so funny and he spoke so earnestly I would have had to laugh if I had been entirely drowned, instead of being engaged merely in spitting out a gallon of water. One eye-glass was broken, and he was dripping all over, and his hair was glued shinily to his skull, and he glared at me with the dignity of an emperor on a throne. He evidently forgot I could speak English, for he demanded indignantly,

*“Pourquoi ne pouvez-vous pas reposer dans les canots?”*

I pointed out to him between spits that you can't repose much in even one canoe while it turns turtle, but he treated me coldly, and was immediately absorbed in wiping off his hair with a handkerchief wetter than water.

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Vézina couldn't swim, and we'd yanked him out by one leg across some rocks, which had defaced him some, and he was mourning over himself like a dove, all in a hunch on a stone, and Walter was polite to him with a stately politeness.

"Vézina, *je suis fâché que vous êtes smashé*," he remarked—not to joke, but just because he always talks Franco-American. When I laughed again he turned on me savagely.

"I think you've been funny enough for one morning, Bob, without—without—grinning like a—like a—ape," and his eyes flashed fire as he said it; but it wasn't reasonable, for when you've been funny you always grin. Then he inquired vindictively, "Why don't you do something?"

And I just said, "What shall I do?" and that made him madder.

But I didn't really see much field of activity except to sit and click our teeth—Vézina's sounded like a sewing-machine, and we were all shivering. And everything I said and everything I didn't say, Walter was madder. I couldn't seem to please him. So I retired myself behind a tree, because I had



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to laugh when I looked at him squeezing his "*linge*," and at Vézina hunching and crooning. They're awful babies, those French-Canadian guides—they think they're killed if they get batted a little. I believe myself that an accident does people good now and then—wakes them up. Being tipped over didn't hurt me at all, only toughened me. Anyway, I stood behind the tree and choked back my feelings and watched Walter wring out his sacred person in sort of echelons, slantwise all over him. It didn't make much difference in the effect—there seemed to be tanks of water bubbling to the surface, the more he squeezed; but it calmed him.

All of a sudden he remembered that the gun and our coats and the lunch and Vézina's axe were still under a few feet of water, and he gave a wild-eyed start and shouted out, "Fish up the traps," as if it was a well-known military order.

Goodness knows I was only anxious to satisfy him, so I sprang from my ambush quite hurriedly, and very unluckily lit on Vézina, who howled. I apologized, but I'm sorry to say Walter couldn't control his unruly member yet, and he made a few

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more unnecessary remarks about useless long legs and awkward young colts and such rather ungentlemanly speeches. But in a minute we were hard at it fishing, and the atmosphere got a little gayer as we hauled up this and that relic, only I suffered excruciating pain because I didn't dare laugh when Walter tried not to get wet. Vézina's speechless grief when the lunch came up—great Scott! but it was a sad-looking lunch!—was also another thing which I had to choke back my smiles over. But I did it, and with tact I managed to work myself into their friendly graces, and soon we were all chuckling with each other in the kindest way. Nobody stays cross long in the woods, or if they do they don't belong there.

Then Vézina thought of a thing and remarked it openly, which I must say dampened my spirits. Of course I wanted Margaret to get a caribou, and of course I'm always ready to give up to ladies, as I have been educated to believe that "*place aux dames*" is the foundation of morality. But when Vézina said that my caribou, which I had just barely not killed, had gone off towards Lac Cœur,

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and that very likely madame, which is Margaret, would get a shot at him, I will say it struck a cold pang to my heart. It seemed so cruel that out of all the beasts of the forest Margaret should have to choose that one, my own peculiar caribou. It made the sorrow of losing him sharper, somehow. It appeared to me disagreeable, as well, for Vézina to add this speech:

"If madame gets a shot, we will have venison in camp this time," was what he said. "Madame is determined—'*tanné*'—to kill. Also she is composed—steady. She shoots well. *Elle ne manquera pas cette fois,—madame.*"

Now you know there was no use in his wandering on that way. I'd been composed enough myself when I shot, but how can anybody be steady when his fat brother gives a big wriggle and tips the boat over? French guides are disgustingly garrulous. It made me nervous, that idea of Vézina's, for I could see he was right on one point, and that the caribou most likely would come out on Lac Cœur, that being the nearest water. I didn't wish Margaret any bad luck—of course everybody knows

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that,—but it didn't seem quite the right thing that her first caribou should have such big horns. One ought to begin at the bottom to be symmetrical. I'd hate to have Margaret get conceited and cocky and think she was it, so I didn't know but it would be better for her own good, if she got a chance at it, that she should miss that especial caribou. Knowing the nature of women, I feared she might get stuck on herself and spoiled for practical use.

Well, then, I kept listening, with my ears full cocked, for a shot from towards Lac Cœur, and, sure enough, we hadn't quite finished fishing up the delicatessen before it came—rip—bang—thunder—und-dunder—it rang out and died majestically away. It's a most startling thing to hear a shot about half a mile through the woods—it sounds so calm and fatal. Nothing I know of is as striking, except when a muskrat jumps, and that's more sudden. Well, Walter and Vézina and I all stopped in our tracks and stared at each other, and it seemed as important as what President was elected. Nobody spoke a word, but we just listened intently to the slow echo dying in the hills. Of course we

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were mostly trying to see if there was to be a second shot, but there wasn't, and so we couldn't tell a blessed thing about what had happened. She might have missed him clear and not got another chance. Or she might have wounded him, and he have gotten away where they'd have to follow him up before firing again. Or, as Walter suggested and Vézina, being nasty to-day, thought likely, she might have dropped him dead at the first pop.

Anyway, we couldn't tell, so we just had to wait there, shaking and shivering—for the matches had all got wet, of course—till something happened. And it did seem as if it would never happen. I thought we ought to go to Lac Cœur to see if we couldn't help—it seemed unmanly to leave a woman almost alone to fight a great caribou, and three men are a good thing in many cases. But Walter and Vézina both jumped on that idea, and said we'd arrive just in time to scare the beast if he was wounded, or get in the way awfully, and Margaret could look after herself. So I was overruled—the worst part of being young is the bossing. We waved our arms and walked up and down two

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rocks and a log, and kept our ears peeled for another shot. But not a shot came—not a sound of any sort to relieve our dulness for about two hours and a half—and then far back in the woods we heard a crack, and then some more cracks, harder and freer, and I knew in my sinking soul, from the careless way of stamping along—I knew that they had got a caribou. People are selfish when they've had good luck, and don't reflect how they may be injuring other people's hunting by their noise. Of course my gun was wet, and I couldn't have shot if I'd seen one, but it was just as inconsiderate of Margaret.

In a minute we saw them winding through the trees and over the rocks and logs, Margaret in front with her gun on her shoulder, grinning all over, and with just the cocky sort of a look that I was dreading. And behind her came Godin, or a walking thing of some sort—you couldn't have told whether it was a man just by looking, for he was bent over double under a great floppiness that was dark gray and furry and enormously horny! Gee! what horns! It was the biggest head killed that year

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in the club. With all my generosity I couldn't help gnashing my teeth to think how mean it was, and what a mere accident also, that she should get it instead of me. There are some things very hard to be generous about, and caribous are one, and that head was so inappropriate to Margaret, a simple beginner, and a girl.

But she came prancing along, and we stood and waited and Vézina brought out a deep satisfied "Ah-h!" in the sort of way that makes you feel like chunking a man in the lungs, and Walter gave a silly crow and waved his old cap, which he'd just fished out of the deeps. Margaret stopped suddenly as she got to the open and stared at us standing in a row, with water oozing from every pore, and chattering our teeth.

"What in the world!" she said. "I never saw three such scarecrows."

I leave it to anybody if that showed a kind heart, when she was nice and dry herself and bringing her sheaves with her. But I am still very fond of Margaret, and she has good points, and so I forgive and forget. Then, while Godin brought

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out dry matches, and he and Vézina jumped around and built a roaring fire, there was a lot of talk about the shooting. The guides were as pleased as Punch, and Walter seemed as delighted as if he'd got the beast himself, which is just like Walter's laziness; and as for Margaret—

Well, Margaret certainly is a nice girl, but I do think she might have remembered that it was my caribou, and that I was the one that scared him for her. If I hadn't fallen into the river, I'd have killed him, sure as fate, on the second shot, and then where would have been her chance? In the sight of heaven I gave her that caribou, and I don't grudge her an inch of him, as any one may see, if only she'd given me credit. But it made me sick to see how she took all the honor to herself.

"I got him on the first shot, Wallie," she boasted. "I hit him in the back of the neck, and he fell plump—dead that second,—and it didn't hurt him at all. I'm awfully glad he didn't suffer, Wallie."

Wasn't that just like a girl, to want to do mur-



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der pleasantly? They can't seem to be whole-souled about things—yet you know I admire and revere their virtues—I do, by ginger! Then Godin went on to tell how well she'd hunted the beast, and how cool she was, and what a hard shot it was at a hundred and fifty yards through some trees, and all in a fawning sort of a way that would try any straightforward person's patience. But Walter swallowed it down and begged for more, and Margaret behaved, I thought, just a little undignified for an elderly married woman—she's all of twenty-four,—for she jumped around and squealed, and asked Walter if he could see her through the glory of it, and if she was “no a bonny fighter” like Alan Breck in *Kidnapped*, and a whole lot of such stuff. As for me, I was perfectly polite, but I didn't slop over, and I was really very desirous to stand by the fire and get warm. So Walter had to begin his guyness at me, being cut off from Margaret for the present.

“Our precious Bobby's a little sore,” he began it, —and I don't think that was a pleasant way. “But what's the trouble? It can't be—but no, I wouldn't

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insult our Bobby by the thought," and he stopped, and looked watery around the eyes the way he does when he's being especially foolish. He knows I hate to be called "our Bobby." Well, of course Margaret waited for him to come out with it, and I watched him from behind the fire, and I knew he was going to be silly, but I couldn't think of anything to say to stop him. In a second he was at it again. "I wouldn't hint that a gentleman was jealous of a lady's success—far from it. Curious, though, that the same morning should bring such different fortunes to you and Margaret. What were you shooting for, Bob? Were you perhaps trying a carom shot on that caribou? Now that would be interesting. With all the others you have killed—but I forget. Let me see, Bob; have you ever killed a caribou?"

Now Walter knows as well as I do that I haven't, but he knows, too, that there's always been some trouble. He went on again:

"But perhaps I wrong you. Perhaps it may have been from unselfishness that you tipped the boat over and scared the caribou to Lac Cœur. That was

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handsome of you, Bob—but too radical. Next time remember you can attract a wild beast's attention just by yelling. Or waving your arms, even—that's better for the subsequent hunting."

Now I don't think all that's very funny. It seems to me plain tiresome, but Walter was tickled with it, and he might have gone on for an hour if right there I hadn't begun to have a feeling that I couldn't stand any more. I felt the way I did when I was a kid and wanted to cry—but imagine a fellow of fourteen crying! So I came from behind the fire suddenly, and I said, as nicely as I know how, he being older—"Walter," I said, respectfully, "you talk like a teapot. I suppose you could be funny like this a month, and I'd have to take it, but I must say I don't think it's very nice of you. I mind losing a shot, like anybody else, and I think you've rubbed it in enough. I had to be cheerful when you were cross, because you would have taken my head off. Boys aren't allowed to have any tempers, or they get punished. And if they do have them they get made fun of and can't answer back. And I'm cold and hungry. And,

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anyway, Margaret does owe that caribou to me, for if I hadn't fallen in the water I'd have shot him next time, and I did scare him over to her to shoot, and nobody gives me any credit."

Well, sir, Margaret is a brick. She just blinked at Walter and at me, and she ordered as quick as she could:

"Walter, explain this," and he told her about the shooting and the spilling and all that, which he hadn't before. "Oh!" said Margaret, and she walked straight over to me, and I was deathly afraid she was going to kiss me, or something unpleasant. But Margaret's got sense. She just took hold of my shoulder and shook me a little and said, "You cub!" and then she laughed, but not disagreeably. "Walter's perfectly horrid," she said, and that of course pleased me. "He makes both our lives wretched, Bob, but we'll unite against him and see if we don't get even. And about the caribou—I didn't understand. Of course he's owing as much to you as to me, and you have a much better right, because you've had so much more experience in hunting than I. I'm just a

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greenhorn, you know—it was just beginner's luck, my getting him."

How can anybody help liking a girl who talks sensibly like that? And I was relieved also to see it hadn't made her cocky. She went on:

"I won't give him to you, because I know you wouldn't take him, but—I'll tell you what—I'll consider you've given him to me for my birthday? I'll have him mounted as fine as a fiddle, and hung up on the wall, if we have to build an addition to the house to hold him, and over the horns I'll have, 'Many Happy Returns, from Bob to Margaret.'"

Well, of course that made us all laugh, and then Walter held out his hand and said:

"Cub, I beg your pardon. I ran the thing into the ground, and I'm sorry, for you're a good cub."

And then my animosities were entirely withdrawn, and I felt very cheerful, and could kick my legs and join with the guides in admiring the "panaches"—the horns, you know. After all, it's a wonderfully comfortable feeling to have "meat in camp," no matter who has gotten it. Walter says

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the all-over glowing sensation that comes after a kill is a direct inheritance from old barbarous days, when people went hungry unless they did kill something. I suppose so. Walter knows a lot, and when he's not being a guy he's a satisfactory brother.

It was nice going down the Rivière Sauvage again, for we made all the noise we wanted, which is always a pleasure, and everybody was joyful. Margaret's boat was still ahead, and out of the middle of it stuck up those enormous horns, and once in a while she would turn around from the bow, where she was on her knees paddling, and pat the horns and call out,

"Thank you, Bob—I like your present, Bob."

Which of course made me feel beneficial. And then Godin would knock the ashes from his pipe on the side of the boat and lay it carefully in the bottom, and clear his throat and begin singing. Godin's voice just suits the woods when you're floating down a little hidden river in a canoe, and I love to hear him sing,

*"Quand le canot vole,  
Bon est en canot."*

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That's not the story, but yet it all is a part of Margaret's and my hunt and of the day that is now crystallized to the wall in the hall of Margaret's house, where that big caribou head is hanging, on a shield of black oak. Over the top is carved,

"Many Happy Returns, from Bob to Margaret."

And I want to say again that I have the highest respect for Woman, and I think that, for a girl, Margaret hunts very nicely.

# THE LAKE OF DEVILS





## THE LAKE OF DEVILS

**W**HEN I was a youngster I used to be quite a superstitious sort of person—I suppose because I had a nurse till I was rather large, who was the sort of Scotch woman which believes in fairies and red devils and those things. Even at my present age, when I am fourteen, I feel at times a tendency toward the ultra-natural, against my better judgment. I suppose that was the reason I got so keen about finding the hidden “Lake of Devils,” the minute I heard about it.

My brother Walter and I were up in his club in Canada, and we had left our regular camp and gone off with tents and guides to find better fishing. We followed up the Rivière aux Vents—the River of Winds, you know—and discovered three little lakes on streams that discharged into it, and there were plenty of caribou and moose trails, but no fishing signs, and we were getting discouraged.

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We had been away three days, all the time working through such wild country that I was knocked in the head when Walter said we had been going toward the railroad steadily and were not more than five miles from it now. But I looked it up on a map and found he was perfectly correct, as he sometimes is. The railroad doesn't mean much up here anyway, for it runs through a maiden wilderness as wild as you can catch 'em, with only one thing in the likelihood of a settlement in the two hundred miles between Quebec and Lake St. John.

One day we were camped by some rapids on the River of Winds, and after lunch—which identically resembled breakfast and dinner, being trout and bacon, flap-jacks and maple sugar—Walter, who is perpetual emotion, decided to walk up the small stream above our camp, and see if it looked as if there were a lake on beyond. But I'd had enough of tramping through alders and beaver meadow and windfalls, and as there was plenty of sunlight I thought I would bask. It's the reasonable thing for an animal to do after it's fed. So I left the dining room, which was the top of a big

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flat rock, to the guides, and deployed on to a slope a few feet from them in good hot sunshine, and lay on my back, and became as a boa-constrictor. The fire was blazing in a grove of balsams at the edge of the rock, and the guides bent over it cooking, and it was nice to hear the lake splash up on one side and trout sizzle on the other.

My back was toward the men as they ate, and as I paid no attention to them they paid none to me. These French Canadians are indefatigable talkers and Walter says they probably talk all night in their sleep. The four men were chattering like mag-pies. I didn't hear what they said for some time, but after a while I happened to listen out of the deepness of my laziness, and I caught on to it that they were chaffing my guide, Henri Jeunesse, about something. Then I began to take notice. But what with the patois which they speak to each other so fast and so clipped that it makes you dizzy, and what with not believing my ears at the little I caught, I couldn't make any particular head or tail of it. They seemed to be guying Henri about riding a caribou, and Henri acted pleasantly,

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giggling and chuckling as men do, yet it did not seem to me plausible. Walter won't let me talk to the guides at their meals, so I had to stay choked up and not ask questions; but I made up my mind I would investigate it out of Henri what it was, the first chance. So when he and I went out fishing about five that afternoon I hadn't forgotten, not by no means, and all unknowing to him I took his conversation gently by the nose and guided it with unexampled skill to the point.

"Henri," I said, "what were the men making fun of you about at lunch?"

Henri's paddle missed a dip, and he looked at me with polite surprisedness. "Comment, M'sieur Bob?" he asked, and I repeated.

"Something about—it sounded as if it was about riding a caribou," I went on, "but of course that's nonsense."

Henri began to laugh in a notice-how-modest-I-am way, but he seemed tickled all the same. "If M'sieur will cast to the left, by the dead tree fallen in the water—a large enough one broke there, *à c't heure*. But yes, M'sieur, it is true, what the

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others have said—that I rode the caribou. It was a droll of a ride and I was astonished.” Henri stopped. You always have to punch him along a little to make him go.

“You rode a caribou—Cæsar!” I said. “Go ahead, Henri, tell me about it—that’s great.” Of course I had to say it in French, but that’s a kind of a free translation.

He grinned sheepishly, and just at that junction I hooked a trout in the swift water at the top of the rapids, and story-telling had to stop while I played him and Henri yanked him in, slapping him on both sides of the boat. A monster—must have weighed a quarter of a pound. Henri tossed the flies free, and I cast over the first slide of the rapids into the pool below.

“Go on,” I said; “I want to hear about the caribou ride. What was it?”

That guide is awfully easily embarrassed, and he wriggled and looked miserable, and lighted his pipe and fussed about before he began, yet you could see somehow that he wanted to tell about it.

“It is nothing—a very simple thing—but if

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M'sieur wishes to hear—" and then he was off. "I was with my brother Tomas in the woods—it was two years ago, and on a lake in that direction." He turned and pointed back over his shoulder up the river, west. "In fact, that lake is not badly near this place—thirty minutes, not more. So it happened that Tomas and I guided for a M'sieur who shot a caribou, an old one, a large one, and the beast was by the shore on a sand beach, and he fell and lay, and did not budge. So it happened that I was in front when we came up from behind the rock where the M'sieur had watched, and I ran forward and jumped astride the caribou as he lay, and put my hand to my knife-case to take my knife to cut the throat, as M'sieur knows is right. But as I sat across him, before I could draw the knife, *v'là!* the caribou was on his legs, and with a great spring he jumped to the water, and *v'là!* I was riding him! for as he rose I had clutched at his long mane—he was as I have said old, and the collar of his neck was shaggy and white. I was stupid, I, for I was stunned with surprise, having never known a man to ride a caribou, so that before



**"Before I knew my danger, the beast was swimming in deep water, and I on him."**





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I knew my danger, the beast was swimming in deep water and I on him. And the M'sieur and Tomas, my brother, merely regarded me, astonished. They dared not fire, for fear of killing me. And the beast swam like a *bateau à vapeur*, and I continued to ride him by the mane; but I prayed aloud—I prayed to Saint Joseph my patron, that I might get to shore, for I cannot swim, not to this day. M'sieur Bob will probably laugh, but I prayed large prayers across that lake—it was half a mile wide—and it was probably the Saint who preserved me. The great beast debarked into a thicket of alders, yet I was afraid to jump from him, for he went fast—*crais!* it was fast. But it so happened that I became scraped because of the thick woods and because the caribou did not consider me, but, snorting horribly, plunged through them. So that I had misery. So that finally, about two acres from shore, I let go his beard and threw my arms in passing about a strong spruce tree, and I was cast with force against it, and *v'là!* I was again on earth. But much bruised—*crais!* I walked with difficulty after that ride.”

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I had left off casting, you had better believe, to listen, and when Henri stopped I just stared at him searchingly.

"Are you sure that is all true?" I asked, and I asked it solemnly—he wouldn't have dared to lie.

"*Oui, M'sieur,*" he spoke right up, and I believed him, and I do now. Of course I'd heard of creasing animals before—that is when a bullet grazes their backbones and stuns them for a moment so they drop like dead. But they're only scratched and most generally they're up and off so fast that their bewildered murderers don't have time to shoot again. That isn't so awfully rare—I'd heard two or three accounts of it, so I knew it was possible. But the riding—that was a stunt! Innocent as I knew Henri to be, it was all I could do to believe it.

"Henri, I tell you that was fierce," I said to him cordially; but I had to say it in French, and it sounded rather prim. Then I thought I would cross-question him. "What kind of a tree did you claw on to?" I asked. Henri looked up quickly with a scared expression, and I thought maybe I

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was about to corner him somehow, but all he said was :

“*Une epinette, M’sieur Bob*”—a spruce, you understand.

“How big?” I continued examiningly.

“It was not badly large”—“*pas mal gros*”—said Henri; “an old enough tree, of perhaps eight inches across. But why does M’sieur ask about that tree? I have never told but one or two persons about that tree.”

“Never told? What was there to tell about it?” Henri looked very embarrassed again, and suddenly began paddling. “Don’t turn the boat,” I said, “I don’t want to go up stream. It’s all right here. But I want to know what there was about the tree.”

As I said before, you have to give Henri a punch every few minutes to keep him going. He shook his head seriously, and his eyes looked big.

“Ah! that was a strange tree, that—but M’sieur will laugh if I tell the tale. In fact, he will not believe it.”

“Oh, that’s all right, Henri,” I said agreeably.

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"I may not believe it, but I won't laugh and I would like to hear it."

Well, then, if that guide didn't make me open my eyes. I couldn't believe my two ears, though mostly they are very confidential. I had to draw a few more of his teeth to get it, but the story he told in the end is this which I shall now relate. It seems that the Montagnais Indians, who still live in the country around the Club in considerable numbers, have a tradition of a lake which they call the Lake of Devils, which no white man may see and live, their theory being that it is thick with devils around there and they kill the whites. But the hunting is supposed to be gorgeous, and every year the Indians celebrate a grand hullabaloo very secretly, and go off in small parties to hunt with their blessed devils. None of the French guides know exactly where it is, but it is supposed to be in a general way somewhere about the head waters of the River of Winds, and the portages to it are blazed with a mysterious blaze, which the Indians never describe, only it is different from any other blaze. Henri said that when he debarked off the

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caribou he was sitting down backward half way up the tree-trunk, and as he slid down he felt his hands catch in a hole. So when he got right side up with care he looked to see what it was, as a hunter would do, and there, on the tree, was the oddest blaze he had ever seen—he couldn't describe it very well, but it was in two parts and cut deep. It was "*pas mal vieux*"—"not badly old"—and Henri said he was as sure as he was of his life that it was the beginning of the portage to the Lake of Devils.

"Didn't you go ahead and follow the trail?" I asked, and he pretty nearly fell out of the boat. He actually trembled at the idea.

"No one in the world could make me follow that road, M'sieur Bob. From that road no white man may return. The trees are all *plaqués*—blazed—on the side as one goes, and for the returning one may not find the *plaque*. They fade from the bark as one passes. It is the road of death for us others, white men. Ah! but I know—it is certain. It was the first cousin of my father, Josef Moison, a man of great boldness and very strong—he tried it. It was a bad winter for the hunting—there was

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not of game in the forest around our village, and his family had need of meat. So it happened that he said he had no fear of devils, he,—he feared more the hunger. And he went to search that lake. One believes well that he reached it, for when they found him in the forest, at the foot of a great rock, with his neck broken, there was the meat of two large caribou in his pack. Also, more lately, perhaps five years ago, Auguste Ouillette of our village, a man very curious, who took pride, as well, to know all of the country, went off alone to see that lake, but of him there was no news afterward. Without doubt the devils killed him. There are other tales as well, of men lost on that road. It is said that the devils are of a scarlet color, and that they jump and play about the edge of the lake.”

Well, I broke my word then—I howled. The picture of bright red devils bounding cheerfully over a sand beach waiting for white men for supper took me all of a sudden. But I was sorry I had done it, for Henri shut up, and I couldn't get much more out of him. However, I did extract that he could go straight to the lake where the caribou

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was killed, and that it was not far from camp, and that there was an old portage; he had marked the place where he had found the blazed tree.

I could hardly sleep that night for planning the fun I would have next day. Naturally, in this enlightened age, I scorn devils, but the idea of them, and of Henri and the Indians really having faith in them, gave me rather nice cold shivers, and I think now that I must have had just the least scrap of belief in the story too; just a faint reminiscence of the superstitions of my childhood. Anyhow I thought it would be no end of fun to find that place and follow it up to the hidden lake.

When I told Walter I was going off alone with my guide and didn't want to tell where till I got home that night, he said:

"You're a mysterious young cuss, aren't you? Going to strike Hudson's Bay across country? I should regret it deeply if you should break those priceless legs of yours when I had not the pleasure of being present. But it will be affecting to see Henri bear you back in his arms—I call that a pretty picture—Mussoo and his faithful guide."



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That's the way Walter pronounces "Monsieur." His French is fierce.

I had a hearty lunch packed—thank Providence for that!—and Walter addressed us briefly before we left.

"Henri," he said, "*ne laissez pas Mussoo Bob devenir perdrix*"; and poor Henri looked respectfully serious, but dazed as to why he should not let me become a partridge. Of course Walter meant "*perdu*"—lost—but his French is awfully *risqué*. Then he adjured me to take good care of my legs, because they were models of the Apollo Belvidere, and all the guides laughed, though they hadn't an idea what Apollo Belvidere meant, and I don't remember myself at this moment. But any student of anatomy can see I'm leggy.

"They're longer than yours, anyway," I shouted back, as we went off; and then we lost the tents and the rapids and the camp fire down the windings of the forest, and went on, picking our way over rocks and fallen trees, through marshes and thickets—the regular going in Canadian woods.

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I could see Henri was not very keen about taking me over to the caribou lake—he looked pretty grouchy. But I didn't ask his opinion, for I know how to manage men. So he swung ahead down the old Indian portage with the canoe, and I jumped along after him with my .30-.30 smokeless Winchester rifle in my hands, and in about twenty-six minutes we looked down from the top of a hill and saw the strange lake shining below through the trees. Of course Henri stopped then, and I went on softly with the gun, in case there should be a caribou or moose in the water. But there wasn't anything, and I signalled back that he might come along. I think it's a pretty sight to see a guide coming through the woods with a canoe on his head. They walk wonderfully quietly, and it looks as if a big mushroom that had grown in the moss had suddenly pulled up its stalk and was gliding through the forest.

Henri slid the canoe into the water and held it for me to embark, and when he was in too, and had pushed off, I told him I wanted to go where he had found the blazed tree. I had my back to

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him, so I didn't see his expression, but his paddle knocked the gunwale and stopped for about two beats. Then he put it in again and the boat fairly sprang forward with the force he gave his stroke. I spoke to him, and he answered politely, though in polly-syllables, but he evidently did not want to talk. When we debarked and I told him to go ahead to the blazed tree, he didn't object or say a word, but he looked mighty glum. However, he prowled about till he found his own blazes, and they were pretty small, and started into the woods ahead of me all right. They were "*bois forts*"—thick—those woods, and I laughed to think of the caribou going at a hand-gallop with Henri on him, scraped with every jump, but afraid to let go.

Pretty soon he brought up short, and pointed without a word to an old spruce, and there, sure enough, was the queerest blaze I'd ever seen. It was cut in deeper than any other blaze, to begin with, and it was two signs, one over the other, and close together. The lower one looked like a semi-circle, and the upper like a jagged roundish hole—it was impossible to tell exactly what it was. I sat down

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on a log and tried to remember what I had read in Parkman and other literatures about Indian signs, and the nearest I could get was that the round thing above might mean the sun, and the jags out of it light-rays, and it might stand for Manitou, the Indian god, and the half circle was probably a canoe, and the two together were the things that were to lead them to good hunting—their boats and the help of their gods. Gods and devils are all the same to Indians.

Anyhow, I was keen now about finding that lake, and I had a scheme for getting back all right. I stepped over a log and wriggled to the other side of the tree and pulled out my big hunting knife and cut a good fat blaze. Henri gave a horrified exclamation, but the bark fell off, and there was a nice, fresh blaze, and no devils so far.

"Come along, Henri," I said. "We'll do that to the other side of every tree, and I'd like to see if we can't get back then." But Henri wouldn't budge. He was gentle and respectful enough, but you couldn't stir him. He just planted his forefeet and stood. "Well, all right," I said finally.

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"It's pitiful to see a big, strong chap like you afraid of nothing, but I'm going anyway."

Then he just begged like a dog. He said he wasn't afraid of anything on earth, but no man could fight ghosts and spirits. He said M'sieur would shoot him if he went back without me. I left him begging, and went on to the next blaze. It was easy to find, and so was the next and the next, and I was having a lovely old time. I marked the other side of the tree carefully every time, and hadn't any idea of not getting back. It was fine woods and good going, up the side of a mountain, and though I'd forgotten a compass, the sun shone and I took the direction as I went. After a quarter of a mile or so, the line ran through a marsh, and of course the going got bad and I couldn't cover ground as fast, and every now and then I had to hunt two or three minutes for the next blaze.

It had got to be one o'clock by the time I was through the marsh, and I was hungry, having had breakfast early, so I unslung the knapsack that held the lunch and sat down by a fine, cold spring. I gathered birch bark and dry sticks, and built a

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little fire and had lunch all to myself as cosy as a bear in a berry patch. I was sorry for Henri, because I had brought all the lunch, but it served him right. I ate a stick of sweet chocolate for dessert, and felt like a new man, and just anxious to run that devil lake to earth. So I stuck the chocolate that was left in my pack and started on to the next witch tree.

That time I had to look five minutes before I found it, and when I did, I got sight of the one beyond it at the same moment, and raced on without remembering my system of blazing. I must have missed two or three trees before it occurred to me, and then I put my hand to my belt instantly for my knife—and it wasn't there. Of course I knew as soon as I missed it that I must have left it where I lunched, for I had it out to cut the butter. I worked very cautiously two or three blazed trees back, till I came to the blaze where I had looked so long for the next *plaque*. Then I was deadlocked. I couldn't find that back blaze to save my life. I hung my handkerchief high on the last tree I was sure of, and searched from it in

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every direction, again and again, but I couldn't find the queer cutting that I wanted.

I hunted the woods over for half an hour, till it got to be about three in the afternoon. A big wind had come up and the sky had clouded over, and without a compass I didn't know my direction any more. It shows what a deep fundamental yearning toward superstition is in the soul of the strongest that I began to feel Henri's story take hold of my heartstrings, whatever heartstrings may be. Something made me feel funny any way. The more I tried not to think about it, the more it crept up and whispered things. This was just what Henri had said—you couldn't find the blazes to go back. I seemed to hear his voice saying: "No white man may return on that road." I tried to laugh out loud to myself, but it sounded something awful—I never heard such a laugh. I didn't try but once, for I wasn't sure but it was one of the devils. Then I tried to whistle the "Bamboo Tree," which is a cheering melody, but the tune went lame and I stopped in the middle when I remembered it was about a tree. I didn't care for any more treeology.

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I looked at my watch and it was half-past three; the wind was rushing and howling through the branches; the sky was black, and a drop or so of rain fell. I had to get somewhere; I couldn't stop in those lonely woods; they choked me. Rather the Lake of Devils than this; I could breathe better if I got out from under the waving leaves that looked as if they were rushing to get at me. Of course I was awfully silly, you know: I realized that all right, but I did feel just that way at the time, though I'm ashamed of my human weakness. I got so I hated to stir for fear of the noise I'd make, though there was plenty of noise all around me.

But at last I gave a jump, gasping as I did it, and picked up my rifle and started on a run for the next blaze forward, which I could see distinctly. They followed each other thickly for half a mile, and I walked fast, tearing along just to get somewhere. I must have been growing more and more nervous, for suddenly, when I couldn't see a marked tree in front of me anywhere, I stood still and let out a scream like a hyena. I simply couldn't help



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it, but it seems now as if I were a born idiot to stand there in the woods all alone and yell like a big baby because I was scared. My! but wouldn't I have been glad to see Henri! I hadn't any pride left, and I only wished I'd been a coward too.

Then my eyes lit on a tree I hadn't noticed, and there was that fiendish sign which I hated now with all my soul, yet longed to see as I had never longed before. I found myself hugging the tree and laughing at it. I can't understand how I could have been such a kid, but the foolish things did themselves without waiting for me.

I worked along from tree to tree, and there seemed to be two of me, one the regular Bob that I was used to, and another duffer that broke out every few minutes with crazy tricks. Once I listened and he was trying to recite "To be or not to be," in French. It was awfully funny, and I laughed at him till tears ran down my face and I tasted them in my mouth. But all the time the two of us were following the trail from *plaque* to *plaque*, and suddenly there was the glitter of water through the trees—there was a lake! I remember hearing the

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other boy whisper "Sh—Sh" to me and then giggle softly in a silly way, and as I stole along I loaded my rifle and put it at full cock, which of course is a way I never carry a gun. The other Bob whispered things in French.

"*Voilà le Lac aux Diables*, M'sieur Bob," he said. "*Nous serons mangés*," and I answered him out loud:

"I know it's the Lake of Devils, you goose," I said crossly. "But we won't be eaten before I shoot the first one. There aren't any devils anyway—but don't talk or they'll hear us."

Suddenly there was a wide beaten road which I had come into before I saw it. I don't know why, except that I was a lunatic generally, but I dropped on all fours and crawled along it. It seemed safer. However, it was so inconvenient to carry a rifle that way that I soon got up and walked. Then in a minute more I had come out of the woods altogether and was on the shore of a great lake—eight or ten miles long and two or three wide. There were islands in it, and the wind dashed up noisy waves against them and against

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the shore where I stood. It was wild and beautiful, but I didn't care much for that. A damp mist filled the air and the hills looked steep and black in the storm, and twilight, and nowhere was a sign of life. I stood still and waited two or three minutes for something to happen, but it seemed as if I were the only person on earth.

When suddenly I saw rising in the air, above the woods, beyond a point of land on my right, a thick blue cloud of smoke. I can't describe how that pleasing sight blood-curdled me. I was dead sure they were at it, cooking a white man. It was dinner-time—though I don't know if devils dine at night or at noon like other country people. I had to see what was going on, and I crawled up, scared to death, bound to find out the status of things. I didn't make a crack—I stalked those devils well, and when I got where I could peep through some bushes around the point, sure enough there was one of them, jumping about on the beach, just as Henri had told me.

I had got so worked up now that I was hardly surprised at all; but talk about blood freezing!

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My teeth sounded like a sewing machine. The fiend wasn't all red, only the upper half of him, but his legs were long and skinny, the way devils always are. I hadn't a doubt but it was up with me, for I think I had gone a little crazy, as they say lost people do; but I was angry too, and I wanted to do some damage before I was killed, so I put up my rifle and sighted on that jumping-jack on the beach. I was just going to pull the trigger when something in his antics caught my eye. It was unbelievable, but he was certainly doing the running broad jump in just the form that Mr. McKelway, our trainer, puts us through it at school. I lowered the gun and watched, and he made a cracking good jump—it must have been nineteen feet. I was glad I hadn't shot him.

Well, something in the naturalness of that devil's jumping seemed to make me breathe easier, and I worked through the bushes to where I could see farther around the point. And what was the sight that burst upon my astonished eyes, but a great big building, a hotel, about a quarter of a mile away! I felt like an elastic band that has been

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stretched to its longest and then suddenly let go. I'd never had such a whack of relief. Indians and devils don't build hotels. That knowledge came at me, and the sweetness of the white skin surged up over me. I gave another look at the red and black thing still jumping by itself, and behold! it was a human boy, a boy in a red shirt. I sprinted down that sand whooping, and he turned in surprise as I came up, and then I can just tell you I was surpriseder than he, for it was Billy Bond, a chap who goes to my school.

"How do you do?" he said first, for I was out of breath. "Where did you drop from?"

"Bill," I said solemnly, "I was going to shoot you. I thought you were a devil."

"Well, I'm not," answered Billy. "You would have been awfully fresh if you had."

Then we fell to explanations and recriminations. Instead of the mysterious Lake of Devils I had come out on Lake Edward, right on the railroad, the one settlement of the two hundred miles between Quebec and Lake St. John. Billy and his people were staying here at the hotel for a few

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days on their way to Roberval on Lake St. John, and he had come down to the beach to see if he had forgotten his track work. We sat down against a log and split my last piece of sweet chocolate, and as we munched I told him about Henri's story and the horrid time I'd had.

"You'll just have to spend the night with me," he said, "and we'll send you back to your brother with a guide in the morning." That was out of kindness, but of course I didn't need a guide. Then suddenly he gave a shout. "I know what that blaze was," he said. "I've never seen it, but an old hunter who's around the hotel told me about it just the other day. There was a chap here several years ago who was in some little college, and was an Alpha Delta Phi. He was clean silly about his society, and was forever cutting his sign, a star and crescent, on the trees and the piazza and all around. He thought he could fish, too, and was keen about finding new places. Well, one day he went off with a guide who took him to Black Pond—that must be where you started from—and the guide let him believe nobody'd ever discovered it before and that

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it was full of trout. So he started out to cut a trail to it, and to make it a bigger secret, he cut only on one side of the trees—to show the way back. The other side he marked with pieces of red tape, which are all gone now. And the blaze he cut was the Alpha Delta Phi sign, the star and crescent.”

“Oh!” I said; “oh!”

“It took him and a guide a week to cut that trail, old Jean-Baptiste told me,” Billy went on. “And there wasn’t any fishing in the lake anyway. It’s shallow and only good for caribou. Nobody has ever used the trail since—there’s an easier way to get to Black Pond.”

When I got within a mile of the River of Winds the next day I thought there was a war. At intervals of five minutes the hills rebounded with two rifle shots close together, and when I realized that Walter was signalling for me it made me sick to think how he was wasting cartridges. After all that expense I thought he would welcome me with enthusiasm and brotherly affection. I thought he would kill the fatted canned chicken for me; but no sir! He was morose at me and wouldn’t

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listen decently to my adventures. I said to him very agreeably that it was all right now, and that it was a pity to lose your temper when things were satisfactory, but all he answered was:

“I hope never to live through another such night. You go off devil hunting just once more, you young cuss, and I’ll kick you into the lake.”





# **THE CAMP OF THE GOOD FAIRY**



## THE CAMP OF THE GOOD FAIRY

**M**Y young brother Bob, long-legged, spindle-shanked, draped casually in a big bath-towel, stood astride a hole in the camp floor, and, bending over, stared.

"Great Cæsar! What do you think that little red sucker's been up to now?" he inquired, in the manner of a man who has great facts to impart.

Knowing Bob's methods I knew he meant the squirrel, and I didn't care if he did. I was just out of the lake, very wet, and beginning to be chilly, and the cub was in my way.

"Do get out of the middle of the room, Bob," I answered, "and get dressed, and let me. I'd like some of the fire."

"Yes. In a second," the youngster answered, with a terse dignity that will be a help to him some day, when he is at the head of a large business. Then he bent still farther, and clawing with

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lean fingers into the widened crack, he brought up a long, green, rubber-headed, able-bodied lead-pencil. "If that isn't exactly what I wanted!" was his triumphant sentence.

It did have the look of an answer to prayer, for Bob and I had been at our wits' end the day before to know how to send out a letter, lacking writing utensils. We had forgotten pen, ink, and pencils with sweeping thoroughness, and, a hundred miles of Canadian hills being on top of us, we could not get any. A guide was finally found in possession of half a crippled lead-pencil, and birch-bark did the rest. But the squirrel had dug up one adequate to the whole trip from under the log floor.

"He's a good spirit," the cub remarked sentimentally. "Every morning he scratches up anything I want. It's just like a fairy story."

It was a fact that Bob's lost cuff-button had gleamed from the edge of the hole the morning before. But there is seldom a silver lining without a cloud, and I answered briefly with a sniff, and Bob laughed. My feelings about the squirrel differed from his. At fifteen the human animal seems

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able to sleep serenely while an unresting small beast puts in at his ear nine conscientious hours of scampering, gnawing, and scratching; but my years nearly doubled Bob's, and my nerves had been strained a bit too far, and I could not sleep at all. The boy and I were in an old club camp, waiting while our own was building a mile away up the lake. The moss chinking had dried and fallen out in places, the logs were shrunk, the flooring broken, and the result of it all was holes where mice and squirrels might enter freely. Most of them we knew only as vague little brown shadows disappearing under beams and into crevices; but one squirrel was so curious, so apparently interested in our doings, that in four days he had come to an acknowledged partnership in the camp life, with my brother and myself. We identified him by a large nick out of his left ear, the mark, probably, of a hard-won escape from some larger animal, and he was so bold a rascal that we had plenty of chances to study him. Two minutes' silence in the camp where Bob and I read or cleaned our guns, almost always brought out the fleet little golden-

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brown vision, first into the middle of the floor, then under the legs of our chairs, then rigid for a second where our hands could almost touch him; then, with a startling burst into his scolding, mocking song, off and up the side of the camp, and across the roof and away. A sudden movement, a word from us, always frightened him either quite away or into the wonderful frozen stillness of a wild creature, every strong little muscle tense, quick breath arrested, velvet-brown eyes fixed and staring. For all my grudge against him the creature fascinated me—the ease and lightness of his movement, the overjoy of living that seemed to have oceans of energy to draw on, after a small lifetime of continuous swift dashes. I felt myself a huge, hulking animal, heavy and awkward, as I watched this tireless, copper-colored bunch of fur and springs.

Almost he persuaded me that I liked him, with his grace and his daring, his solemn mischief and his innocent curiosity, his poise on the verge of confidence in our friendliness—in the daytime! But when night came, and I fell into the sound, first

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sleep of healthy physical weariness, to be wakened with a jump at a mad scamper of tiny feet across my bed, or the crash of a bottle knocked on the floor by his squirrelship—when this sort of thing happened two or three times a night, I rose up in the morning with blood in my eye.

“Bob,” I said, “I’m going to shoot that brute.”

“Who?” demanded Bob, wide-eyed, as if I had a habit of killing a man a day.

“That beast of a squirrel.”

The welkin rang with Bob’s fifteen-year-old shouts of laughter. “I heard you last night—it was great! You woke me up shying shoes into the stovepipe. Then you gave the order to ‘Stop!’ Then you groaned when Bunny fell into the water-pail. Then he scrambled out and ran over you, I reckon, and you whispered ‘Go away!’ in such a dignified way for the middle of the night that I stayed awake to laugh; and just as I was getting to sleep again he knocked over a bottle. Oh!” Bob doubled in a fit. “It’s your shaving soap! You always get it!”

It seemed much less funny to me, but it was



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curiously true—the little wretch appeared to make a distinction between us. His tricks to Bob were always friendly tricks, and only my belongings suffered. I said rather stiffly:

“Well, it may be witty, but it’s his last joke on me,” and I got down my pistol and began rummaging for cartridges.

Then the cub pleaded earnestly. “Oh no, Walter! You wouldn’t be murderous, would you? He’s such a little beggar, and so pretty! He trusts us, too—why, he sat on your foot yesterday.”

My heart is not of granite-ware, and I stopped looking for cartridges and looked at Bob.

“And he dragged in my necktie when I left it out in the rain—he’s a good fairy to the camp. And I think it was awfully funny of him to knock off your soap and nick your razor.”

I had forgotten that—I began the cartridge hunt again.

“Now don’t,” begged Bob, catching my hand. “Think how we would miss him when we cleaned the guns!”

“But, cub, I can’t sleep. We’ve been in this camp

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five nights, and I haven't had a good rest yet. I came up here because I had overworked, and I must get sleep. Last night that little devil kept me awake till four o'clock. Either he must leave the camp or I must."

Bob caught at the alternative unexpectedly. "Why can't we do that?" he asked earnestly. "There's the big walled-tent—why can't we have that put up and sleep in it? We could keep our traps here, and stay here day times when we're in camp at all. I think it's jolly to sleep in tents."

I looked at the youngster quite speechless for a moment with indignation.

"Well, you are the coolest!" I sputtered at last. "Do you suppose I'm going to be turned out of camp for the benefit of a contemptible little squirrel? Not much, sir! I'll settle the question in another way," I concluded darkly, and brought up the green-covered box of No. 22 cartridges.

"Oh! Walter, *please*," Bob begged pitifully. "I can't bear to have you kill him. He's so cunning and so little, and he means all right; it's just fun to him."

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"Yes," I interjected, with deep-felt sarcasm; but the cub went on in a flood:

"Do let me have the tent up! I'll '*cherche*' the guides, and look after it all alone, and you can go off fishing with Beauramé, and not have any bother. I'll do it all right—I promise I will. And it'll be bully in a tent. I'll have a big camp-fire every night, and 'sapin' cut for the cots, and I know you'll like it better than a dirty old camp."

There was something in that, besides which I can never bear to refuse the boy what he really wants. He is a good boy, and so ready to give up his way to mine, that it is not fair to disappoint his wishes when they are strong. But I was not very gracious. I said only:

"I'm going to take Beauramé and go over to Rivière à la Poêle for the morning. You can try the tent if you want, but I won't stay in it if I'm uncomfortable." And Bob's gratitude was out of proportion, and he capered out to the boat on his long legs like a large frisky spider, squealing with joy and thanksgiving.

On Frying-pan River, under the cloudy sky of

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a warm day, with the water a bit low, the fishing was a marvel that morning. The stream bubbled with trout, and they flew at my brown hackle, they almost swallowed my Yellow Sally, they rose madly for my hand-fly, a quiet-colored Reuben Wood. Any fly seemed to suit them, and four times I landed two at once, and twice I had three on the leader, Beauramé skilfully saving all of them one lucky time. Most of them were under a half pound, but one or two came up to a pound and a half; and I took fifty, and could have taken five hundred, I believe, but for time and conscience. It was a phenomenal morning's luck, and I came back in the best of spirits, with overworked nerves nearly quieted, and underworked muscles aching comfortably.

The sun came out gloriously from the morning's gray as I threw my paddle on the dock and stretched my cramped knees from the bow of the canoe. There was an old clearing about the club camp where the bushes grew high and thick, and thirty feet from the dilapidated pile of logs I saw the white gleam of our brand-new tent shining

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above the fresh greens in the sunlight, and I caught through the underbrush the cheerful crackling of a fire. I heard the ring of an axe, the slow crash of a falling tree back in the forest, and Zoetique's soft voice near the tent called with a rising inflection:

"*Comment, M'sieur Bob?*" as the boat ran in to the landing. But M'sieur Bob's moccasined feet were kicking high in air as he raced away from Zoetique's inquiries and down to the dock to meet me. There was the proper excitement over my catch, the correct questions asked as to the stream and the water and the flies and the rapids. I had my innings first, as fitted the returning voyager, and Bob was genuinely interested as fitted a true sportsman. Yet it was with an air of arriving at the goal that at last he led me down the little trail through the bushes to the new encampment.

The tent smiled at us spotlessly, the canvas cots were invitingly comfortable with their folded blankets, there was a floor of fresh balsam boughs, our necessary belongings were hung neatly on poles swung into crotched standards and placed back of the beds, a glowing fire of birch logs blazed

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and steamed outside—it was certainly very attractive.

“Now isn’t this better than that nasty old camp? Aren’t you glad the squirrel turned us out?” demanded Bob joyfully, dancing from one leg to the other. “I’ve made ’em work like tigers, and I’ve worked too. Alexandre is off chopping a big pile of wood for a camp-fire to-night, and Zoetique is splitting dry sticks for kindling. We’re going to dress and undress by the stove in the old camp, and keep our things there for dryth, but it’ll be lots more fun to sleep out here. Isn’t it bully? Don’t you think it’s bully?” and, as always, the cub’s delight and excitement went to his legs. He vaulted about like an ecstatic grasshopper.

That night it rained. The five-foot birch logs burned courageously, as birch will burn through a deluge, once started, but it needed some nursing. The careless abandon of its crackling, the pleasant certainty that a log consumed through the centre will only help the fire as it break and falls, the hot reach of the red-gold bed of coals drawing ever more and more steaming wood into its pulsing circle

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—all the masterful dash that makes the charm of a fire—these were gone. We put in spruce with a careful hand to be sure of heat, before we laid on fresh birch logs, and the dull silver bark was wet as we lifted them, and about the fire were patches of muddy water.

In the log camp, with a table, a stove, a lamp and books, we were decently comfortable until bedtime came; but the world was a sorry place when, our pajamas covered with mackintoshes, our ankles cold and bare, we blew out the lamp, and shutting the door of the warm camp from the outside, stood on its ramshackle piazza in the black night and pouring storm.

Ten yards away, a faint glow in the jungle told that our fire, though discouraged, still stood wearily by us; but the tent was only a blacker shadow. I had no love for the squirrel at this stage of the game. I felt it a bitter thing to go out-doors to go to bed in a cold rain on the squirrel's account.

Bob, swinging a lantern, pranced lightly before me down the winding way, the length of scarlet

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pajamas as his rain-coat swung open telling of unquenchable glee still in his speaking legs.

“This is fun! Just like burglars or something?” he announced gayly; and I stumbled over a root and fell into a wet bush, and the mud splashed over my sneakers on my skin, and I felt that I deserved a halo for not saying what I thought. But the tent, so far, was dry, and when we got down into our blankets and the last invoice of spruce logs made friends with the red-hot coal-bed and blazed up cheerfully, it was not so bad after all. The fire-light played goldenly in wide, wavering masses of light and shadow across the white walls; through the half-open flap there was a narrowing picture of wet woods and ghostly, ever-dimmer silver birch trunks, fleeing silently in long procession, back, back to the great unknown mountains. The logs sputtered and crackled and fell with delicious unconcern. It was comfortable to lie drowsily and feel that all the human animal needed to be we were—fed, warm, and dry. Let it rain, let it blow; life was simple. With blankets, a tent, a certainty of breakfast to-morrow, what was there to do but go to



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sleep? And before the thought was finished, the cub and I lay dreamless. And as we slept the skies opened, and the rain descended; the drops came thicker, harder; the sturdy birch fire sizzled, steamed, went out in stress of tempest; about us, that one red spark of hope being gone, was sodden forest and raging storm. And we slept quietly.

Till at last, beating against the cobweb that stood between us and misery, the torrent had its way, and the tent leaked. Many a woodsman knows, and will not forget, the first vague breaking-down of unconsciousness, when he feels the insistent, merciless, slow drop at long intervals fall on his face, and turns again to the strong, pleasant arms of the sleep that holds him.

I reasoned with myself heavily that it was a good world, that this was a wordless horror I was dreaming—this imagined leak in the kind, friendly tent—it was morbid, almost irreligious, to believe such a thing. Burrowing an inch further into the blankets I slept again.

But again it came, that calm, soft splash on my left eyebrow, and this time it waked me enough



To explore by that cheerless illumination for leaks.



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to be sure of its horrid reality. Still I clung to hope and to slumber. It could not be but that all might yet be well—it would stop in a minute—best not notice it. So, numb with drowsiness, I moved my head and drew away my blankets, and dropped off; and the next thing I knew a small river was trickling coldly down my neck.

Those who know what it means to light a lantern in a chilly tent at two in the morning, to explore by that cheerless illumination for leaks, and to fight them pitifully, as best one may, with arrangements of rubber blankets and holes hastily dug in the ground—those who have been through this form of spiritual training, know that work in the slums does not approach it as a moral test. To Bob it was no test at all, for he regarded it as “fun.” His brand of the “purple light of youth” seems to work like a photographic red-lantern, excluding entirely all rays that show discomfort. I know of only a handful of things in the world which the boy does not enjoy in one degree or another, and that the tent should leak appealed to him as a simple adventure of a sportsmanlike sort.

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For me, I worried through the night with two or three readjustments of the precarious apparatus against leaking, with more or less sleep of a staccato character, and with a deep and deadly remembrance of the squirrel responsible for my misery, and with a plan for the next day. In accordance with it I sent the cub off on an exploring expedition with his guide, saw that the rest of the men were at work for the morning, and, taking a chair and a book outside the open door of the club camp, I waited, in the bright sunshine that was laughing now at the tempest of the night, a loaded revolver at my right hand, for M. l'Écureuil—the squirrel.

I did not have to wait long. There was a light scurrying across the broken floor and I looked up to see him by his favorite hole in the middle of the room, facing me with pretty confidence, sitting upright and munching with quick, tiny bites at something held in his short arms to his mouth. His fine bushy tail curved like a plume around him; he was such a picture that I decided not to shoot him quite yet, to wait and watch him play awhile.

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"You little beggar," I said aloud, "do you know that your minutes are numbered?" At my voice he dropped his lunch, froze into utter stillness and stared so at space for a second, and then stampeded delicately across the camp straight toward me, over my foot, and out of sight. In a moment I heard him scolding me shrilly, thirty feet away, from the end of the dead tree that mirrored itself, a steel-tipped blur, in the wind-touched lake below.

That was the last of the spoiled child of the woods for ten minutes, and I had lost myself in my book when I was aware through the forest stillness of a small insistent noise like a needle scratching on a bit of bark. I looked up. There was a rough bench about six feet in front of me, and on it was my friend the enemy, comfortably resting on his hind legs, sitting up like a Christian and lunching again on a large, luscious red raspberry. I almost laughed aloud at the friendly sociability of this creature whom I was waiting to kill. He had such a saucy and casual air of saying "I thought it would be pleasant to bring my lunch and have it with you," that I felt it a breach

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of hospitality to shoot him down. My hand loosened the revolver, and I took stock of the points of this vivid bit of life: short shining body, alert even in stillness; high-bred Roman line of forehead; velvet-black, big eyes with a cream-colored outline; round muzzle, black pointed, sensitive; short forelegs—or arms, as they seemed; long pinkish claws that held the big berry like tiny, thin brown hands; and, crowning glory of the perfect mechanism—the beautiful feathery tail, copper-tinted, tipped with vanishing silver, sweeping about him like an aureole, an expression of the elusive, uncertain light that plays ever around wild things of the woods.

As I studied him he sat up and ate daintily, shooting out sidewise glances which I knew took me in but which never met mine—I never once made him look at me. He sat so five minutes within reach of my hand if I took only a step; yet I knew that, though I might look my fill, if I made one quick movement he was gone, and the knowledge added to him the charm of the unattainable. If I watched my chance I might possess myself, certainly, of

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the little body with a bullet-hole through it, but the bit of intense life I might never touch,

And as I looked, and he munched, it seemed as if arguments swarmed from his silence why I should not kill him: First the old one of the doubtful right to take life. A little lower than the angels we may be, yet all the men in the world in all their lives may not put together one squirrel. Then, from far back, down dim ways from the ancient dawn of life there was a faint call of kindred blood. Once an ancestor of M. l'Écureuil and an ancestor of mine had been much of the same sort. My unsung progenitor had developed a trick of using his claws as a thumb and forefinger, had preferred legs to tail as a means of locomotion; two or three habits of the sort had made the difference. Otherwise I might have been the squirrel nibbling at the berry, he the man with a loaded revolver. I seemed to hear Kipling's race-word, "We be of one blood, thou and I," in the echo of the little beast's scolding song. Also the undoubted superiority of his existence to mine bade me hold respectfully my hand. Sometimes, in my best moments, in the still



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hills, I felt for a breath of time what was the untrammelled joy of life; the secret of freedom was half whispered, the glory of simplicity flashed for a second before my eyes; he knew these things always. I stared upward from earth at masses of emerald birch leaves, splashed between silver trunks below and turquoise skies above; he lived up there, on intimate terms with the tree-tops. The things that were my dream ten months of the year—steep mountains, quiet lakes, rushing rapids, the flash of jumping trout, the woodland walk of moose and caribou—these were his life of every day. How might I dare destroy this living song of the woods?

And meantime the said song, with an infinite suddenness which might well be the despair of a Winchester cartridge, whisked himself off. The swiftness of his going made me jump, and the jump dispelled my soliloquies. I reproved myself for sentimentality, for weakness of will, and full-cocked my revolver carefully with a determination to carry out my plans and not wander into side issues. Next time the animal appeared I would shoot him. It had been impossible to do it when he treated me

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like a comrade—all but offered me a bite of his raspberry. But he could hardly do anything as winning, as saucily bewitching as that again.

I filled my pipe, lighted a match, and in a moment was pulling away, and reading again at "Monte Cristo." I forgot my disarming foe in the forever-enchancing story, and it was perhaps ten minutes later that a light scratching made me raise my eyes cautiously to the bench in front.

I could hardly believe them, and I never expect anyone to believe what they saw, but it is quite true. There sat Monsieur, the copper-colored, the resourceful, the fearless, as before, squatted comfortably on his back feet, and in his half-human little hands he held to his mouth, as he faced me, a pipe! Why I did not drop mine from my astonished jaws I do not know, but I stared in as frozen a silence as my visitor himself could have achieved. To all appearances he had come as man to man, to have a smoke with me. One of his sidewise glances assured him I was properly motionless, and I went on to study the situation. I did not dare even to lift my head, but from under my eyebrows I saw

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that it was an old ruin of a pipe-bowl, with a bit of stem still left, and he had doubtless picked it up in the portage where some guide had thrown it away as useless. The fact, the coincidence, has never ceased to surprise me, but that it happened as I have written it is a simple truth.

And so M. l'Écureuil won his case against me. I watched him nibbling delicately at the old wood for a few minutes, and then, with a movement which sent him scampering, which he little knew was the signing of his pardon, I picked up my Smith & Wesson and unloaded.

. . . . .  
“*Encore de toutes choses!*” remarked Bob to Godin at the lunch table that day; it was his most frequent speech.

It sent Godin flying to the open kitchen, roofed with birch-bark, built against the flat side of a boulder, and it brought him back to the table in quick trips with frying-pans of sizzling trout, of hot potatoes, with fresh flapjacks, with other delicacies of a camp cuisine. And while filling his plate with a liberal hand, M'sieur Bob showered, lib-

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erally also, French conversation upon us. It is correct to talk to the butler at table in the woods, and the cub told Godin, the circle of guides at the fire listening earnestly, the story of the squirrel, adding the theory that he was without doubt a fairy.

Godin's laughing blue eyes grew serious. "It is that which arrives at times," he said, and nodded impressively. "There are beasts which bring of good luck, one knows. My grandmother, who was born in France, it is she who has told me. She was very old, my grandmother, and had much experience. There was a red calf in the household of my great-grandfather, her father, which brought great good luck to the family, and many troubles came when by unhappiness the brother of my grandmother killed that calf. And in our village itself such things are well known. It is the beasts that have red skins that are lucky—as, by example, the red fox that came always to the house of Louis Beaupré."

He turned toward the fire where the men sat listening solemnly.

"Blanc, thou rememberest that red fox there,

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eh? Eugene, thou also?" he demanded in swift patois, and there was a deep chorus of "*Ah, oui!*"

He went on. "It came constantly to the house, which was at the side of the forest, and they gave it much to eat, and it was gentle almost as a dog, and all went well. But so it happened that the brother-in-law of Beaupré came to make a visit, and he was a man ignorant, rough, and he shot the fox with his '*fusil à cartouches*,' and so it happened that the luck changed. Louis Beaupré, he—he cut his foot with his axe the week after, and also the pig died, and also an infant; there was much trouble in that family because of the killing of the fox."

Bob was listening with eyes stretched wide.

Godin, getting his breath, continued, as he brought another "*poêlée*" of simmering fish from the fire: "Also it is well known that a red-haired child brings luck." Suddenly he began to laugh. Bob and I looked up expectantly, for Godin knows a joke when he meets one.

"*Qu'est-ce que c'est?*" the boy asked, laughing too at the contagious soft chuckle.

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"It is but a little happening of our village, of the doctor there." Godin was diligently refilling the glasses, making excuses to stay about the table till he could tell his story. A word of encouragement set him off: "He is known to be a good doctor, very capable, yet he drinks much. But so it happened that there was a funeral—it was the wife of one of my cousins, a Godin, who was to be buried, and the doctor was there, but a little drunk—a little *en fête*. And the daughter of the dead woman, a child of twelve years, had hair very red. So it happened that the doctor leaned over to her from across the room, and whispered, but quite loudly, so that all heard him with distinctness, 'You ought not to be here—you are not in mourning—your hair is red.' "

He went off into restrained fits of laughter, and the guides about the camp-fire shook softly, their faces shining with childlike merriment. In a moment Godin was decorous again. "But that makes nothing. However, it may well be that the squirrel of M'sieur is perhaps more than a mere squirrel. Nobody knows—I am glad that M'sieur did not

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fire. It is not '*chanceux*' to kill a beast so intelligent that is red. He will without doubt bring luck now to our camp."

And as I poured half a pint of maple syrup on a hot, puffy flapjack I little thought how my tiny foe was to justify Godin's prophecy.

The next day after lunch, while the cub was off in a boat with Zoetique to "*cherche*" fire-wood, I sat about camp doing nothing in particular, but meditating more or less on the crimes of a mink which had persistently stolen our fish. His last misdemeanor was the ruin of a four-pound trout which I had taken on the fly, and which I had pictured as the *pièce de résistance* of a meal, boiled with cream sauce as Vézina knew well how to do it. The mink had chewed the fat back entirely off my game. So sly was the thief that I had never seen him, and despaired of a meeting, yet we could not keep the trout from him. I reflected, as I waited for Bob to come in, that I might poison him, and the thought flashed across me of the pyrogallic acid among my photographic materials. Instantly I searched in my box and found the bottle,

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and looked about for something plausible to put it on. A fish, of course, would be the best, but there happened to be no fish about camp, and I had a desire to carry the plan into instant execution. The cub, who seems to have a sweet tooth in every corner of his mouth, could never get enough of that Canadian staple, maple sugar, and brought majestic masses of it from the dining-room to stay himself between meals. A large brown chunk lay on the table now, between two plates to guard it from mice and fairies, and it seemed to me to be what I wanted. A normal mink would surely experiment at least with so alluring a bait. I mixed with water and poured in slowly the deadly pyrogallic, and the sugar drank it greedily.

“Walter,” called a fresh young voice from the landing, “the trout are jumping like mad—big ones—sockdologers! Get your rod, quick, and come on.”

An invitation to fish never finds me slow in responding. I hurriedly put the cork into the bottle of developer, and threw the covering plate over the bit of poisoned sugar, not troubling myself that



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I pushed it partly over the edge of the table in my carelessness. Then I rushed outside, took down my rod with careful haste, and was at the dock in half a dozen jumps.

Bob was right about the fishing; it was uncommonly good, and after a fruitful afternoon of it we went directly with our spoils to the dining camp and stood about the fire talking hunting talk to the men, while we waited for the tails just out of the water to curl up in the spider. Supper was long and conscientious, and, when at last we paddled back to our camp, a late August twilight had blurred the wide, still landscape into solemn depths of blacks and grays.

"I forgot to bring my piece of maple sugar," Bob lamented, perched high on the stern, a slim young figure silhouetted against the dull silver water, his paddle plying rhythmically. "I've only about half a pound at the camp and I'll chew that up in a minute," he went on.

I hardly heard, and did not realize till afterward what he said. I was staring at a gap in the darkening hills, and pondering Zoetique's theory that at

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the head of the stream which ran through it must lie a lake, where no one had ever been and where should be good country for game.

I thought long, geographical thoughts, of directions, of distances, of possible other lakes in those mysterious openings, lying waiting with their secrets untold; with glassy surfaces that had mirrored no faces but dark faces of Indians; where loons called to deep loneliness of mountain silences; where moose and caribou, stately and shy, came down to drink unmolested as they had come for twenty centuries.

The spell of the forest was on me—stronger in the gloom of the twilight than at any other time—so I did not notice that we had run alongside the dock, until Bob, suddenly arising to the length of his pervading legs, sprang lightly to shore, his jump kicking the canoe and me off into outer darkness.

I fished cautiously for the paddle in the unbalanced boat, and brought myself deviously to land, slightly cross at the poorness of the joke from my side of the question. The cub was gone

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from the *quai*, leaving me to pull up and turn over the canoe alone, and I made ready for him a brief but biting reproof, as I mounted the dozen steps which led to the camp door. I heard him stumbling about inside and complaining.

"What is it?" I asked, irritated afresh at having to delay my remarks.

"I left it right here," the boyish voice went on through the blackness, and I heard him knocking things about on the table. "It was away back and covered over. I can't think what—" Another bottle or two went down under his rummaging fingers.

"Bob, what on earth are you talking about?" I demanded.

"Why, my lump of maple sugar. I came in because I was in a hurry for it, this second. I couldn't wait till—" but with that I had screamed out, and my voice frightened me:

"Bob! for God's sake! Don't touch it! Don't touch it!" I cried, and through the dark silence I knew that the boy was suddenly as still as death—as still as—I could not finish the thought.

With unsteady fingers I scratched a match and

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lighted a candle, and a few words told the reason of my panic. The sugar was gone from the table, but we did not have to look far to understand. It was on the floor near both the plates, which had been knocked off with it, and by the ruin of his work, caught at last in his mischievous career, lay the poor little villain of the plot, the squirrel.

His pathetic short legs were stretched stiffly; the white fur of his breast, that had moved so fast to his quick breathing, was motionless; the black, brilliant eyes stared lustreless; the plume of his tail, gorgeously brown and silver, curled around him. We who might not touch him alive, with a finger-tip, could handle now the wild thing as we chose. Dust to dust for the beauty of his body, and the breath of his life was gone—where? Before the dignity of death I rebelled at the human judgment that denies to dumb things, which are God's creatures too, a share in our eternity. He had saved the cub's life. Unknowingly, indeed, but very really, he had stood the last test of humanity; he had given his life for his friend. Out of the deep places of the soul where life-long loves

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are kept, welled up a sudden sense of my brother's dearness which choked me, and as I stood speechless, staring at the lad, he lifted his yellow head, which had bent silently over the still, tiny thing on the floor, and I honored the manly boy no less that his eyes shone with tears for the poor little dead fairy of the camp.

# **BILL THE TRAPPER**



## BILL THE TRAPPER

**T**HE long ribbons of Bill the Trapper's smart sailor hat blew against his face, and he shook them aside as he tightened the snaffle rein, and looked up anxiously to his big cousin.

"This is a very objectional horseback hat," he remarked. "I wish Mamma wouldn't make me wear it. And I wish Sir Galahad wouldn't always trot when I want to talk." Then he hastened on to the gist of the conversation. "Of course I know that dragons aren't a common thing. I suppose if there are any they're most extraordinary and unsuspected." Large words were a pleasure to Bill the Trapper, but he was not always fortunate in their use. "What I believe is that there may be just a few, just a very little few, of dragons left in the deepest wildernesses, that hardly anybody knows about. Don't you believe there might be just about that, Bob?"



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The smooth forehead was wrinkled with earnestness and the innocent blue eyes were at once dreamy and keen; eyes from which looked out a buoyant soul that would see and seize joy and adventure in every dim place of childhood and of life.

"Don't you believe there are some dragons left, Bob?" The voice was of such tremulous eagerness that the cousin of fifteen hoary winters had not the heart to turn the hose of education on the fire of enthusiasm.

"It is hard to tell what there is in the world, Max," he said, and shook his head wisely. "Those big forests in South Africa, you know."

"Yes," assented the Trapper, with deep gratification. "In darkest Africa—that's where I hope to illuminate them. I'm going to—my plan is, you know, to go there when I'm big enough, and trap them. I shall invent monstrous traps of an entirely new kind—I've got the idea in my mind." The tense small face relaxed into a radiant smile, and the bow of his mouth puckered between dignity and pleasure. "That's why I call myself 'Bill the Trapper.'"

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I wrote a poem about it—about dragons. Would you like to hear it?"

"Of course. A lot."

The little chap settled into his saddle happily, and his knees pressed Sir Galahad's fat sides as if caressing them. This was worth while. This new cousin was an immense improvement on John the groom, who knew nothing about dragons and touched his hat and said "Very good, sir," when Max recited poems. They walked their horses slowly through the sunshine and shadow of the bridle-path of Central Park, under the trees that were misty with the first golden leafage of spring, unconscious that other riders, trotting down the woodland way, all cast a second glance, or shifted in the saddle to watch admiringly the two handsome boys sitting so well their handsome mounts, and so prettily absorbed in each other.

"I call my poem 'The Fearful Night,' " Bill the Trapper announced, and turned his blue gaze inquiringly on his cousin. He was a trifle uncertain as to the title. But Bob's eyes were seriously attentive and reassured him, and as the words rolled

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unctuously from his mouth, he lost himself in the delight of authorship, and in the genuine swing of the rhythm.

*“In the fearful night,  
When the dragons in flight  
Did frolic and dance in the tree-tops,  
A hunter skulked low  
With his trusty cross-bow.  
And once he did turn  
But could scarcely discern  
The form of a dragon behind him.  
The wind it was howling—  
The dragon was growling,  
But an arrow it sped  
At the dragon’s huge head,  
And the big beast fell dead  
While fangs fell from its head.”*

“Did you really write that yourself, Max?” asked the older boy, with a most satisfying astonishment. It was so long since he had been eight that he had almost forgotten what chaps of that age could do. The little cousin was an intelligent youngster, an agreeable surprise to Bob. He ex-

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pected to find this ride rather a strain, and conversation with a mere baby an effort; but behold! he was enjoying it. Like the gentleman that he was, he set himself to furnish his part of the entertainment.

“Up in the club in Canada, where we camp in summer, you see lots of traps. All along the portages there are lines of different sorts. Little ones for the musk-rats and the mink, and others under the water for the otter, at the foot of their sliding places, their *‘roulades,’* as the guides call them. And there are traps for lynx and marten, and sometimes you run across a whopper for caribou. I saw a place once where a caribou had been trapped and a bear had gotten at him. They had a big battle—the ground was all torn up. But the bear won; the caribou’s bones were thick around.”

Bill the Trapper’s soul thrilled with delicious horror and his eyes were intent and wide. Here was a man who had seen life! It was honor indeed to ride along through the Park on equal terms with an elderly, experienced person, a very perfect, gentle knight of adventure, who talked to him

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without condescension on subjects of deep import to both. John the groom, who knew nothing at all of trapping, always talked down to his level as if he were a baby to be humored. When one is eight nothing is more exasperating than this intangible talking down.

“Will you tell me about some of the traps—how they are made?” he asked respectfully, yet with exhilaration of soul in the comradeship of the tall and all-wise cousin.

And Bob's boy face, as innocent, as clear-eyed as Max's own, lighted with interest, and with pleasure in the homage offered like incense to his prowess. It is the only compliment a normal boy cares for, one paid to knowledge and power that he has gained with effort. Bob had worked patiently over the lore of the woods, and he knew it for his own. So the fresh young voice rolled on smoothly with clear and simple descriptions that yet carried, for all their bareness, the breath of the hills, the sweet loneliness of the forest, the wild shy life—seen in glimpses through dim windows of waving leaf walls—of the creatures which are the inhabi-

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tants of that quiet house of God. And Max listened, fascinated, and punctuated the easy sentences here and there with the staccato of an eager question. Bob stopped with boyish abruptness.

"Those are about all the kinds of traps I know. Let's trot a bit."

The ribbons of the displeasing hat fluttered in the breeze; Sir Galahad, the fat pony, tossed his head with glee and threw out his short legs with pretence of high action, as they rode fast through sun and shade, around the Reservoir, under the bridges, down the long slanting curves of the bridle-path. Across Bob's cheeks lay a stain of color, his cap was in his pocket, his thick, fair hair blew free, and his dark eyes shone with joy of exercise. His horse broke into a canter, and Sir Galahad dashed after him with a mad gallop. But Bill the Trapper, sitting easily as a young trooper, never stirred the firm little hands that held the reins. His eyes were introspective and absent; he was far away from Central Park and Sir Galahad, in the heart of the fairy land where imaginative children spend much of their happy lives. On that

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scene of romance he saw himself, a mighty hunter, strong and wise, stealing through thickets of unknown greatness and difficulty toward the dim, terrible forms of great beasts, scaled and gleaming and mighty, spouting fire and roaring horribly, but doomed to fall before him. The grandeur of facing peril, the rapture of victory over fearful odds, was burning in his blood, was shaking the slender little figure, and his rapt look was bright with the imagined action of his dream.

Bob pulled in his excited horse with a long sigh of contentment. "Wasn't that a bully canter? Didn't they go well?" he demanded breathlessly, and Max came back slowly from the distant country of his vision. He patted Sir Galahad's arching brown neck thoughtfully.

"Don't you know any rather enormouser traps, Bob?" he asked. "Something big enough to catch a—a loathly beast?" His mind was still with the dragons in their lair.

Bob considered. He too had been nourished on fairy-tales and poetry; his own feet had but just emerged from the dewy stillnesses of the Enchanted

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Forest, the fragrance of its airs still wafted, its sweet uncertain shadows still played at times about his head. He knew a little what Bill the Trapper meant.

"Let's see," he ruminated. "Did I tell you about the trap where you bend over the branch of a tree, and have a slipnoose?" Max's eyes, with their curious mixture of keenness and dreaminess—an Edison expression as it might be—were glued on his cousin's face. "If you get a big enough branch, you know, you could catch an awfully big animal in that," said Bob, throwing himself into the question with abandon. "It's this way you make it." He looked about him searchingly, then stopped his horse, Sir Galahad following suit. "You see that gutter by the side of the path?" Max nodded, intent. "You see the stone slab across it? Well, suppose you cut a stick just long enough to fit under the edge, between the edge and the ground. Not tight, you know—just easy—but firm. You chop a notch in the stick and tie a cord—clothes-line, anything—around the notch, and then you bend over the sapling and fasten the tip of it—so it's



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taut—to the loose end of the line, whose other end is tied to the stick. Do you get all that?”

There was a pink spot in each of Bill the Trapper's cheeks. His eyes shone. But his voice was business-like. “Yes, I do.”

Bob went on. “Then, out of more clothes-line, you make a good big slipnoose, and lay it foxily across the path, and the loose end of that is tied to the rope that holds the sapling. Then——”

But the Trapper cut in, gasping with eagerness. “I see it. It's lovely. The animal walks into the noose—that jerks the stick from under the slab—that frees the cord that holds down the sapling—and the sapling springs up bang! and throws down the dangerous beast, the slipnoose runs tight, and his paw is caught upward, and—and there you are!”

The executive side of the baby brain had fastened on Bob's description. With a question or two straight to the point, he understood exactly the making of the old woodsman's invention. Then he retired into the recesses of his mind and pondered,

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while the horses trotted steadily side by side and the older boy regarded the hands and seats and equipments of riders as they passed. In a moment Max spoke.

"I would like to set that trap about there." He nodded gravely where the foot-path near the Seventy-second Street gate sinks into a shady hollow, and the shrubbery crowds thick about it. "There's a good big branch on that tree that would do, and I could hide in the bushes and watch—like other trappers. I wouldn't so much care what I caught—it would be magnificent practice."

Bob turned and stared at him for a moment with astonished eyes, and then broke into an untrammelled shout of big boyish laughter. It rang out with gay distinctness across the decorous shades of Central Park, but, with his bare head thrown back, his bright eyes half closed, he was as unconscious of himself as a young squirrel chattering on a branch. He did not see at all the girl and the man who, abreast of him at the moment, looked up sharply with curious interest that softened into a smile of friendliness, at the happy

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children. The smile died almost instantly on the man's face.

"What handsome boys!" the girl said, and he answered her with a moody word, and went back to what he had been saying. It meant much to him, and the boys meant nothing—or he thought so.

"What can I do, Suzanne, if you are not going to believe in me at all? Why can't you take something for granted? It was business—as I told you—and you know how I have been trained, like a religion, not to neglect business."

"I think—" the girl stopped.

"What?" demanded the man eagerly. "Say it—say it, Suzanne."

"You needn't urge me—you won't like it when I do say it."

The girl's face was cold, almost hard. "I was wondering if you meant always to neglect me, rather than business."

The man turned his eyes on her with a worried, indignant look. "It isn't like you to be unjust and unreasonable," he said. "I did only what I thought was right—what I thought I must do. You must

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know I would rather be with you than work till seven in the office."

"You might at least have sent word. I waited. I hate to wait for a man. It's insulting."

"I did try to telephone you," he said. "I couldn't get you."

"Why couldn't you telegraph?"

"I never thought of it," he said simply.

The girl's slim figure sat still more erect in the saddle, and the beautiful curve of her lips was not gentle. The man looked at her hopelessly—at the pure profile, the heavy braided gold hair that shone between black ribbon and black habit as if mica dust had been powdered over it. Every line of her was perfect, charming, and in every line he read uncompromising anger.

"I'm very tired of it all," she said at length, and her tone was quiet and cool. "It isn't the first time. If you really cared, you would take the trouble not to hurt me; you would think how it lowered my dignity to sit and wait for you without a word."

"I didn't know you would wait. I thought you

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would understand," the man answered in a low voice, a little too reserved, a little too effortless. "I thought you would know nothing would keep me unless it was important."

It was hard for him to explain. The words seemed to come stiffly, without feeling; he could not believe that a little thing such as this could be even a dark spot on the sunlight of his love for her—much less that it could mean an eclipse. When she knew the main fact, and that it meant his whole being, how could small, inevitable bothers of this sort count? But he could not find the words to say the thoughts that burned him, and he only stared on at her, every inch of her dear to him, in wretched silence.

The girl's even, soft voice began again.

"I can't wrangle with anybody—you or anybody. It has come near that once or twice lately. You can't care as I thought you did, or you wouldn't place me in such positions. It had better all end."

The man started as if at a blow, but quickly controlled himself. "You can't mean that, Suzanne.

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You know it's nothing—it's just my way—a different view of things. You can't mean you don't—you don't love me any more, Suzanne?" His voice lowered as he said the words.

The girl, her gray eyes shining with a deep-sea color and light under their delicate black brows, looked straight ahead at the vista of the shadowy bridle-path, and was a moment in answering. Her voice came with an effort, but unhesitatingly.

"I do mean that. I thought I—loved you, of course. But I don't feel anything of the sort for you now. You have killed it. I can't go on forgiving and making excuses for you always. And besides, I think—I am sure—I don't want to. I don't care enough for you."

The man's wide look shone on her a long minute as if uncomprehending, then his forehead contracted and his dark eyes smouldered beneath with the gleam of dull coals.

"If that is so," he said, "I have nothing more to say." He lifted the snaffle with a quick word to his horse, and they broke into a fast trot.

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

The leafy alley of the bridle-path seemed to the girl afterwards, as she remembered that day, the setting of a bad dream. As fast as one may ride and not be arrested they rode, but it was a little, heart-breaking eternity. To ride with him this way, the last time! With obstinate pride she repeated to herself that she did not love him, that she was glad—but it was queer that gladness should make her heart ache with this restless, sick impatience. Would they never come to Durland's? Could she never get out of his sight, crawl into her own quiet room and be free to—to what? Why should she cry if she were glad? It was merely to be away from him that she wanted—the sight of him was hateful. And she stole a glance, as his horse forged ahead, at the broad shoulders, the ease and mastery of his riding—she used to be so proud of his beauty and his horsemanship, in that old time, an hour ago, when they were engaged.

The five minutes at Durland's were over, and they came out of the big cavern into the gentle spring sunset—almost twilight it was now, for they had ridden a bit late.

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"Are you going to walk? You will let me see you home?" he asked, with no inflection in the words, and looked at her with a curious, pent-up something in the calmness of his manner.

She had not thought of that, and her spirit blazed up in an agony of impatience. She must be alone—the strain of being with him was more than she could stand.

"No," she said; "*no*. I will not. I want to go alone."

He lifted his hat and stood aside.

But suddenly it flashed across her what he meant to do. He lived in the street next hers. He must be going home to dress for dinner. He would follow her, guard her, through the Park. She could not and would not bear the feeling that he was there, just behind her all the way. It would be unendurable.

"No," she said again, and her face, that tried to be cold and restrained, was pathetic. "No—please. I can't have you back of me. You go on first, and I can come as I choose."

He lifted his hat again without a word, and



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started, and neither of them cared or knew that they were being absurd. It was almost as bad this way, to walk through the well-known ways and see that familiar figure which seemed—only by force of habit, of course—still dear, still hers, swinging ahead always as she went. It was comfort to know that nothing would make the straight-set head turn; it was luxury to drink in his strong grace, his assured movement—no, it was not. She forgot—it was nothing to her—she did not love him now. But her eyes followed him as if they could see nothing else in the world, and if he disappeared around a curve her pace quickened anxiously till her glance caught him again. Suddenly—but something had happened in the meantime.

Bob and Max had turned from the Park after passing the lovers, and in five minutes more the doors of the stable of the big gray stone house on Riverside Drive had opened to them, and John the groom had received Max's curt refusal of assistance with a grin of admiration. He took Sir Galahad's head as the youngster threw a small

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leg across the pony's back and then stood with russet-booted feet wide apart and hands in his pockets, contemplating his pony.

"Rub him down particularly to-night, John," he ordered. "He's had a rather contaminating ride," and turned on his heel and swung off up the short driveway with a manly air, the groom's eyes following him with smiling pride.

Bob, a born horseman, with a horseman's interest in detail, stayed about the stable fifteen minutes longer, helping to unsaddle, watching the quick, expert care of the animals. When at length, with a guilty thought of dinner-time, he dashed into the house, he was met by a maid.

"Didn't Master Max come in with you, Mr. Bob?" she asked. "We saw the horses down the street and I have his supper waiting for him upstairs, but I can't find him anywhere."

"He must be hiding in his room for a joke," said the boy. "I'll get him," and he flew up the stairway two steps at a time.

At the first landing the little boy's mother came out of her room. "Bob, is that you? Where's Max?"

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Nobody seems to know what has become of the child. It's most extraordinary."

In ten minutes more the household was a search party. As in the case of Ginevra,

*In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,  
They sought him wildly, but found him not.*

And Max's mother was on the verge of hysterics, and Max's baked potatoes and steak were growing cold in the day nursery, and from attic to cellar maids and men were looking and calling for the young hope of the house, but no hope was found.

Half an hour, three-quarters passed swiftly, and suddenly Bob had a thought. With no word to anyone, as children do things, he fled down the stairs, and the great front door with its iron grill swung shut behind him, and as he ran lightly through Seventy-second Street, he knew, by the instinct of a boy, of a woodsman, that Bill the Trapper had passed this way before him. He was right, for not an hour ago, still in his riding-clothes, with a coil of clothes-line slung over his

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arm, a stout stick a foot long in his hand, the dignity of a great purpose in his soul and in his legs, the hero had pressed the stones of Seventy-second Street on the way to win his spurs and his name.

It seemed queer to be going through the streets like this, at twilight, without Antoinette, or John, or anybody. He knew quite well that he would not be allowed, if he had asked, but he kept his mind off that side of the question. How, indeed, might a person be a Knight of Romance and have a nurse go with him? Perish the thought! Such conventions are for the young, and Bill the Trapper, by this day's act, was taking his place with the mature, the responsible ones of the earth. He was going to do a deed—such was his thought—and in truth he was. Straight to the spot he had marked near the Seventy-second Street entrance, he went, down the dip of the shady path, quiet and lonely now, for the city was mostly at dinner. There was the fine young sapling he had chosen, there was the gutter with its convenient stone crossing at just the right distance—it was ideal. A man passed him,

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going down, and looked curiously at the handsome child in his smart riding-clothes, all alone at that hour in the Park. But Bill the Trapper, though he saw him, was engaged in thought, and paid no attention. He whipped out a glittering knife-blade and in two minutes had notched the stick and fitted it under the edge of the slab of stone. He climbed on a bench that stood near the young tree, and caught its upper trunk near the top. The bench tipped over and the conspirator bit the dust. It was a hard knock, but he was not daunted. He set up the bench and started again—with the same result.

Suddenly he realized, bitterly, that he was not strong enough to set the trap alone. He was a very young trapper and very ardent, and the blow was well-nigh mortal. It had all seemed so near accomplishment—so great a glory so close within his reach—there were tears in the adventurer's large blue eyes! It was cruel, impossible to give it up. If only there were someone to help him—some strong muscles to be the tool of his strong brain! In a flash he thought of the man who had just

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passed; he could see him now slouching dimly under the trees on his slow way down the Park. Without a second's hesitation Bill the Trapper, applying his handkerchief fiercely to his tears, ran after him. He looked a little like Morgan the coachman, he thought as he neared him—big and strong, but not as clean as Morgan, and—something. He bent his shoulders more, perhaps. But Max hailed him confidently as he drew on.

"Hi! You there!" he called.

The man wheeled sharply and looked at him with a snarl, and words that Bill the Trapper had never heard were ready to fall from his tongue—but they did not come. Max's quick eyes caught instantly the misery of the face, and his first instinct was sympathy. Before the man could speak, the little clear voice went on with a caressing accent.

"Don't you feel well?" he asked solicitously. "I'm afraid you've got a headache." Max's father had headaches, and he knew they were bad things. "Is it very severe? I was going to ask you to help me, but of course I won't disturb you if you are feeling under the leather." That sounded well,

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it seemed to him. The man regarded him a moment with sullen, bewildered eyes.

"What ye want o' me?" he brought out finally in a growl; but Max heard only suffering humanity in the slovenly accent, in the drink-hardened face saw only a man in pain. It may well be that the guileless eyes, looking to the soul of things, past accidents of birth and breeding and environment, saw the truth. As man to man, Max addressed the scum of the earth, and out of the bruised ruin a spark of human dignity rose up surprised and met the child—as man to man.

"I wanted you to help me in a—in a adventure. But I won't disturb you, you know, if you are going home to rest."

"Going home to rest!" The man laughed, and the child missed the bitterness of the sound.

"Oh!" he said eagerly, "aren't you so very bad? Do you think you could spare the time? Are you busy? Maybe it would assist—assem—assist your headache to stay in the air a little while longer. I'd be a thousand times obliged." The man stared at Bill the Trapper. Here was a queer thing. Some-

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one was considering his feelings—treating him—he hardly knew how—like a gentleman. He could not remember that in his stormy, sordid life he had ever been spoken to in this way before. A little swell, too—he glanced at the miniature riding-breeches and boots, at the belted jacket and the despised sailor hat, and a half smile stole mistily over his heavy features. To look at him no one would have guessed that somewhere in Jemmy Slaggin's make-up lurked a liking for smartness. Bill the Trapper's well-set-up, well-groomed little figure was a luxury to him to gaze upon.

"I ain't so busy this minute," he said, and the sarcasm was lost on Max. "Whatcher want me to do for ye?"

"Now you're a good chap," said the lad heartily. "I knew you must be nice because you look like Morgan, our coachman, and he's lovely."

He put up his slender, brown little hand and patted Slaggin on his shoulder, and never knew that a thrill shook the dirty, greenish-black old coat. Then he slid his fingers into the great fist with a happy indifference as to cleanness and started



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back down the path, and the man followed on like a dog. As they went along, Max explained. As the plan filtered through Jemmy Slaggin's brain, he almost jumped, as Bob had done, with astonishment. Then fear, born of experience, took its place. This was matter for arrest if he were caught. Max talked on earnestly, excitedly, and Slaggin listened and weakened. The child had no thought of hurting anyone, and, after all, if anyone were hurt, it would be a joke that to Slaggin seemed ideal. He could never have planned it himself, but it appealed to his sense of humor. The world was against him—here was his chance to deal a kick to one at least of that cold, indifferent lot. And that it was the child's project appeared in some vague way to make it right. Before the two reached the appointed spot, Max's case was won. The big strength drew down the sapling and fastened it in short order; the slipnoose, artfully propped by little sticks so that a careless foot would be sure to catch, lay across the walk, an innocent-looking bit of rope, hardly visible in the dim light under the arching elms. Max stepped back and surveyed their

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work and found it good. The quaint, constrained smile of gratification that tried to conceal itself, worked at his mouth. He slipped his arm fraternally through the man's, cocked his head sidewise, and together they contemplated.

"It's very experiencedly done," Max gave opinion. "You must be a very good workman. *I think you're one of the nicest men I've ever seen—ever.*"

Praise, confidence, friendliness—little of these had come into Jemmy Slaggin's checkered career. His soul drank them as baked earth drinks rain; he felt a bit dizzy; it seemed to him that he felt as he did sometimes when only a trifle drunk; there was the same gentle happiness of yielding to an influence. Only the influences had mostly been different from this. He did not want to lose the feeling of that friendly little arm against his side; he wanted to keep it close, to clutch it tightly, so that he might through it draw near to decency and cleanliness, and the unknown somethings of life that help a man to hold up his head and to look other men in the eyes—all that, vaguely, painfully

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working in Slaggin's brain, seemed quite possible while Bill the Trapper's brotherly hand lay against his own. All the things that—he glanced up toward the Seventy-second Street gate—the things that were not for him. The gleam of brass buttons on a large blue coat was visible through the leaves. What foolishness had he been dreaming? and all because a kid had treated him kindly. He had better be gone, and that quickly, or he would find himself in trouble, and he did not need more trouble. He dropped the electrical little arm with a pang of effort, and put out his hand with shy awkwardness.

“Gotter go,” he remarked. “Would ye mind puttin’ it there?”

For a second Max did not understand the idiomatic English; then he slapped his fingers into the man's with an eager heartiness that sent a shiver of pleasure through the hulking figure; but, unlooked for, suddenly, there came a wave of reaction. What was this child to him—the son of one of the hated class of millionnaires—the men who ground him and his like to the earth? Why should

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he have done the boy's bidding for the charm of the pleasant ways that an easy life had taught—a life that Slaggin had never tasted, never known how to dream? In a flash of bitter, bullying spirit he was angry that he had worked under orders from this princeling. For nothing, too—why should he? Why shouldn't he get something out of him if he could?

"Got any money? Got the price of a drink on ye?" he demanded roughly—but Max did not criticise a friend's manners.

"A drink?" his treble tones repeated. "Are you thirsty? That's too bad. I know how uncomfortable it is—I'm thirsty about half the time myself, you know. John said I was a tank one day. Are you a tank, too?" Max was pulling away under his Norfolk jacket. "It's funny you have to buy water," he remarked, as his hand broke into the trousers pocket. "But perhaps you're particular like Mamma—she won't drink Croton. Now where is that quarter? Uncle Tom gave me a quarter, and I'll give it to you—here!" He brought out the silver with a radiant smile. "Is it enough for a

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drink? I hope you'll get a good big one with it—it's so refreshing."

In Jemmy Slaggin's mind was going on a struggle such as that undisturbed gray matter had never known before. A fight for abstract honor, for gratitude, was holding its own with unexpected power over the accustomed ugly cupidity.

"I'll be danged if I turn the kid's money into whiskey," he growled half aloud, and suddenly, with a furtive look about the lonely Park, a glance at the policeman's back up on the bridge, he bent over, and guiltily, like a thief, he caught the ribbon that floated from Bill the Trapper's sailor hat and kissed it. Then he had turned and was shuffling away rapidly down the path, while the silver quarter still shone in Max's fingers and his eyes gazed widely after his friend. He could not know that a glow of aching self-respect was lighting the dark ways of a heart; he never guessed that, like the touch of a fairy's wand, the magic of his childhood had turned an animal to a man.

A few minutes later, to Bill the Trapper, lurking in ambush, his soul thrilled with the joy a

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dynamiter may know, came the sound of footsteps. His eyes stared out from the bushes like a deer's eyes from covert at the man in riding-clothes who, with unseeing gaze, marched down the asphalted way. Steadily he came, looking always sternly ahead, and Max tried to choke back his breath, coming fast between hope and fear, as the game neared the snare of the hunter. He was only twenty feet away when a snort of excitement got the better of the Trapper's breathing arrangements, but the man did not hear him. Ten feet—the swinging stride had made it six—three—snap—bang—whack—it was done! Bill the Trapper had won his spurs.

A shriek of rapture blew out from the bushes as if a safety-valve were forced open by steam, but the man did not hear. Queer. It had worked perfectly: one quick foot had stepped over the rope, had caught the edge; the catch stick had snapped out with the pull, the noose had slipped, the freed sapling had bounded up, and there was the prey with both boots five feet in air and his head and shoulders on the path. But why didn't he kick? Bill the Trapper wondered. What a stupid man to lie

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there as if taking a nap! Wasn't he going to gnaw himself loose, for example? It is etiquette, when caught in a trap, to try at least to gnaw one's self loose. Suddenly the situation was complicated. Rapid steps came up the path, the swish of skirts—there was a lady—running! Now what was the good of this? She dropped on her knees and caught the prostrate head in her arms.

“My dear! my dear! Are you hurt? Look at me! Larry! Please look at me—I love you! Larry, won't you open your eyes? I love you, dear!”

Bill the Trapper was disgusted. Why should loving make you open your eyes? A very foolish person. Suddenly she had laid the man's head gently on the pavement, and, springing up, was working at the knot about his feet. Max was worried. She would go and spoil everything. Couldn't she see that he ought to gnaw himself loose? But to the satisfaction of the ambushed plotter, she could not free the boot. The rope was strong, the knot drawn tight, and her fingers trembled. Her efforts only bumped the man's head slowly along the asphalt, and she stopped with a groan. As she looked down,



"Look at me! Larry! Please look at me—I love you!"





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the closed eyes opened and she knelt quickly again and lifted the helpless head.

"Larry! Do you know me—are you hurt? Larry dear!"

But the man's eyes were fixed on his own feet, hung high in the foreground.

"Those boots! Is it me? What—" A vigorous kick resulted in a brisk lurch of the attached body, and the girl holding his head lurched with it and almost went over.

"Don't, Larry. I tried to unfasten it, but it can't be done. You'll have to bear it, dear. Only tell me——"

"Bear it!" His eyes stared at her indignantly from the pavement. "Do you think I'm going to spend my life with my feet dangling—with my head dangl—Suzanne, for heaven's sake don't twist me!" Then another perilous kick. "I can't get loose. What does it mean?"

"I don't know." The girl was half sobbing. "I only saw you"—a sound that was laughter and tears cut the sentence in two—"kick up your heels and—and they stayed up. And I ran, and you were

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lying—your head was lying—on the walk, and your feet were—” She turned her eyes upward, as a kneeling saint may look at an image of holiness.

The man stared up at her and in his eyes were pain, disgust, impatience; but, fusing these, there broke through suddenly a light, that was love.

“Suzanne,” he said softly, and the swaying legs clicked together as he put his hand to her face, “you said you didn’t care.”

All times and all places are possible for true love, for with her sweetheart’s boots swinging above her, with his head balancing precariously against her strained arms, the girl forgot for a second everything but their reconciliation. Swiftly, and somehow without upsetting, her mouth was on his, and the question in his voice was answered.

“I was horrid—unreasonable—I know it. I’ll try to believe in you always. I’ll remember you’re not like other men and I’ll never doubt you again. Only—if you’ll telegraph! Oh, Larry, anyway, don’t ever believe me if I say I don’t love you!”

The wandering sentences made heavenly sense

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to the recumbent lover, and his eyes gazed up at her in a mist of happiness, while the blood rushed to his head and his legs swayed on high.

But the plot was growing uninteresting to Bill the Trapper. This man acted as if his mind was on something else—as if he didn't know he was trapped. What, for instance, was the object of kissing? It wasn't good-morning or good-night, that was plain. Bill never desired to kiss except on such occasions, though Mamma—but Mamma was exceptional. It was time that the master's hand took up the reins. Out of the bushes with a rustle stepped the *deus ex machina*, and the lovers clung, and stared at him.

"Gnaw!" ordered the Trapper. The girl flashed a puzzled glance at him.

"Run, little boy, run!" begged the man, seeing hope in this apparition. "Find a policeman; be quick!"

Bill the Trapper stood with his feet wide apart, his hands clasped behind him, and, regarding them thoughtfully, considered.

"That's not the way it happens most generally,"

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he said, and his suggestions of eyebrows were drawn together with disapproval.

"The way what happens? What are you talking about?" demanded the man impatiently. "Don't you see I'm caught? My feet are tight in that rope. I want a policeman—I want to get loose."

"Yes, of course," assented the Trapper heartily; "but you know you ought to gnaw yourself loose. That's always the way with animals what's trapped. You'll enjoy it a great deal more if you gnaw a little."

Patrick Flannigan, Park policeman, at that moment stopped his majestic progress across the bridge to gaze down where voices ascended from the hollow. The animal that was trapped, his gaze being of necessity upward, caught the light on brass buttons adorning an expanse of chest.

"Officer! Officer there! Help!" And Max's argument was ended.

Three minutes later, as the man in riding breeches scrambled to his feet, as Patrick Flannigan sheathed carefully the big knife that had cut the rope, as the girl, half dignified, half shy, looked with shining

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eyes at her recovered lover, a tall, fair lad, rosy-cheeked and breathless from running, stopped short on the slope of the path where, ten feet from the group, it came out from the shrubbery.

"I'd like to know who done this trick, that's all," he heard the policeman remark menacingly. The rescued victim was handling the rope curiously. Max turned his alert, sweet little face up to the massive guardian of the Park.

"You mean who set the trap, Officer?" he inquired proudly. "I did. It did work nicely, didn't it? I'm glad you like it." And again the happy, gratified smile flickered on his face, as he tried to hold his lips in restraint, and gazed down proudly at the ruins of his success.

There was a startled silence for a moment. Bob took a step toward his little cousin, but stopped again as the man in riding clothes spoke.

"Who are you?" he asked gently. "Who are you, my lad?"

Max looked about the circle of intent faces doubtfully, hopefully. It was a great moment. Would they feel its importance? Would they grasp

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the reality of Make-Believe? Would they know the intoxicating sweetness of the air one breathes in the land of Maybe? That wonderful game of "Let's Pretend," the beginning and the end of romance—would they play it fairly? His whole soul wanted this consummation of a beautiful, a successful effort. He would risk it. In grave silence they waited, these grown-ups, so hard to please, so hard to understand, and Max's hope grew in the stillness. With his legs wide apart, with his brows drawn anxiously together and the blue, innocent search-light of his gaze playing over them, with a seriousness that trembled to solemnity, he spoke.

"I'm Bill the Trapper," said Max.

## THE LOST CARAVEL





## THE LOST CARAVEL

On the 8th day of the last month one of the two caravels which His most Serene Majesty sent the past year under the command of Gaspar Corte Real arrived here, and reports the finding of a country distant west and northwest two thousand miles, heretofore quite unknown. They sailed so far forward that they came to a place where it was extremely cold, and they found in the latitude of  $50^{\circ}$  the opening of a very great river. The captain of the lesser ship had not sufficient courage to pass far beyond the mouth, wherefore Corte Real went on alone, and the other caravel awaited his return for the space of fifteen days, and then returned to Lisbon. If Corte Real's caravel is lost or if it shall yet come safely no one can tell, but should I receive additional information it shall be transmitted to you.—*Extract from a letter written in 1501 by Pietro Pasqualigo, Venetian ambassador at the court of Portugal, to his brothers in Italy.*

**I**F it be true that

*The world which knows itself too sad,  
Is proud to keep some faces glad,*

then the world would be justified in an access of pride should it become aware of my young brother Bob. The air he breathes is saturated with gladness of a satisfying sort, the gladness of an interest

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in living renewed every hour. For him life is a three-volume novel crammed with lurid plot; the jewel of adventure shines to his look from the grayest stone of commonplace. The horses he rides develop gifts and gaits astonishing, let them be the veriest plugs to ordinary people; the alpine heights and the dizzy abysses over which he has fled on his magic skis in the course of a winter's afternoon by the Erie Canal are not to be found in our landscape by other eyes; the marvels that the woods yield up to him within a mile of camp—the beaver-houses, the tracks, a moment made, of moose and caribou and bear, the thrilling sounds of game just hid behind the elbow of a hill—are beyond the dreams of old hunters and stagger the guides. At the first whisper of a breeze from the country of Maybe his light-winged spirit is off in the clouds, and no matter how leaden the sky, he has shortly pierced the gray of fact and is plunging gayly into boundless blue depths of possibility. The lad means to be truthful as he means to be everything within range that is fine and difficult, but the “purple light of youth” swims so thickly

## THE LOST CARAVEL

about him that colors are brighter and perspective more uncertain than when one's air is every-day hydrogen and oxygen. So that his friends have learned to take Bob mostly with a grain of salt.

Yet it was the rose-colored glasses of Bob, and beyond that the persistence and the "hustling" qualities which will surely put him at the head of something some day, which led me into an adventure so remarkable that I hesitate to write it; an adventure out of place by two hundred years in the world that I know; an adventure of whose like I have never even heard outside of a book.

The boy and I were in camp in my club in Canada, and the guides with us were Josef Cortral, Napoleon Ventour, Alexandre Vézina, and his young brother Zoetique. Of these Josef, the head guide, was somewhat remarkable, the rest were ordinary French-Canadians, piquant with the attractiveness and the uncertainty of the race. Cortral, who was by way of being a remarkable cook, looked more Spanish than French, with a lurking hint of Indian in his makeup as well, and a touch of pride and reticence in his manner less

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

winning, but more interesting than the graceful French ways of the other men. Yet he was civil and capable and very intelligent, and withal nearly enough of a piece with his comrades to weave perfectly into the web of our service. Such, with Bob and myself, was the *personnel* of the cast of the play, and the scene was the big stage of all out of doors in a Canadian forest.

On a rock by the river Bob stood and held forth. Trout were sputtering in the frying-pan, and Vé-zina, squatting by the fire, tipped it knowingly this way and that, while his case-hardened face cooked with the fish uncomplainingly. Zoetique wedged dry sticks deftly into the blaze and the other men more or less efficiently hastened the luncheon hour. Bob, erect and single-minded on his rock, buried his hands in his pockets and made oration. The text was a history of Canada which I had persuaded him, with some trouble, to read in the evenings in camp. He had evaded it successfully for days, and, when forced to the issue, had revenged himself on the book by turning it at once into a mine of fascinating suggestions. His brain

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seemed now to be soaked with a golden liquid distilled from what had impressed me as a reliable and straightforward account—in assimilating he had transformed it.

“Think of it, Vézina—Josef”—he addressed the guides in a French which combined in a masterly manner their own *patois* with American slang. “Just think—all this wild country where the club is, right around here any old place, may have been travelled over by those early *voyageurs, cour-eurs de bois*—about the time of Jacques Cartier, you know, and along after that,” he instructed them.

Vézina’s gentle, ignorant face, with its loose-cut mouth and its enormous eyes, turned up to him uncomprehending, impressed, and the trout ran down one side of the frying-pan and threatened to burn as he absorbed the eloquence of “M’sieur Bob.” I was changing my cast of flies and could not but assist at the speaking, but I pointed out the fish to Vézina with such a jerk of my thumb as brought him to. Bob, undisturbed by the interlude, went on:

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"Yes, sir, and before that. Why, do you know, Vézina——"

The luncheon was again in danger, and Vézina's "*Oui, M'sieur Bob,*" was out of the deeps of a flattered soul.

"Do you know that there's the most wonderful thing happened somewhere along the coast down there," and one hand came out of a pocket to wave southward with lordly generality. "There was an old duffer, a Portuguese sailor, named Gaspar Corte Real—you've heard of him likely?" Bob had not before last night's reading.

"*Ah non, M'sieur Bob,*" Vézina's soft voice gave answer and he shook the frying-pan and gazed at the orator. As I stooped to pick up a brown hackle dropped on the moss, I saw Josef turn suddenly from a tree where he was cutting a square of birch bark for the butter.

"Well, anyway," the boy went on, "he lived long ago—about the year 1500, I believe. And he went out with two ships to Cathay—that's the West Indies, you know—for gold. And he got lots—oh, chunks and barrels—and he sailed north along the

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coast of America and turned in here, into the St. Lawrence, to see what was doing. There was another ship with him as far as the mouth of the river, and that one skipped home to Lisbon, but Gaspar Corte Real would turn in for a look at this big river—and I don't blame the lad—but the joke was that he got lost. He and his ship, all crammed with gold and jewelry, just disappeared from the face of the earth and nobody ever heard anything out of him again. Now you see, Vézina, something must have happened—something adventurous, I mean. He didn't just plain go down in the river—a sailor who had sailed from Spain to the new world—that's truck."

"Ah, yes," Vézina agreed firmly, not knowing a word in ten of what the boy was talking about. But it satisfied Bob.

"Of course. I think so, too. No, sir, there was more—there was treachery and mutiny and Indians and treasure and a lot like that—I'll bet there was—for Gaspar Corte Real."

Something jerked from my hand the end of the



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six-foot leader which lay along the moss and the hook of a Silver Doctor caught in my hand and hurt me. I looked up, astonished and irritated. Josef stood above me, a square of fresh buff birch bark in one hand and his big knife in the other, and on his face an expression uncommon enough to check the sharp word on my lips. So absorbed was he in Bob's remarks that he had almost walked on me without seeing me, and now his bright dark eyes were glued on the youngster's face and glowed like coals with excitement. He wore a scarlet cotton handkerchief knotted around his throat; he had picked up that morning a long heron's feather and stuck it in the band of his old felt hat; with the knife gleaming at his fist, with the golden square of bark dripping silver slivers, he was as lovely a pirate chief as one would ask for the centre of a tale of blood and treasure. The difference between the man and his mates was ever so intangible, yet so distinct that it interested me to detect and dissect it. He spoke their speech and lived their life, but there was an unlikeness. Their unambitious content was replaced in him by a restlessness which

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suggested a right to larger things; there was a courage and a dignity about him which they lacked; the very covering of the men, formless and colorless in all of them alike, took another shape on his body—with Vézina and Zoetique and 'Poléon it was clothes they wore—with Josef, behold! it was dress. He spoke:

"How did he call himself, then—that man of whom you tell, M'sieur Bob?" he demanded.

"Corte Real, Josef—Gaspar Corte Real," Bob answered, pleased to be enlightening the mind of the masses.

"A—ah!" Josef brought it out, softly and at length. And again "A—a—ah! It is the name," he reflected aloud, with an evident eye on the gallery, "the name in the old paper," and the effect on his audience justified his art.

"What paper, Josef?" Bob threw at him excitedly, and almost fell into the fire as he took a step toward him.

"It is an old paper of my family, M'sieur," Josef answered; "how old I cannot say, for it was given to me by my grandfather, and he knew

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that his grandfather had it of his father before him. *Sais pas.*" He shrugged his shoulders. "It might be a hundred years—it might be three hundred. It is well brown with ancientness."

At this point Vézina announced in a matter-of-fact tone that the trout were done, and our interests at once swerved. For old papers may keep an odd hundred years or so more at any time, but trout and bacon and fried potatoes deteriorate. Yet while we devoured the pink meat that had been swimming in the rapids two hours before, while we ate flapjacks with an earnestness which mountain air can induce, while our lesser beings disported themselves as famishing bears, our minds, assertive as the bears quieted, kept a grip on Josef's story. Bob, the better by eleven trout and much other provender, fortified also against the immediate future by a quarter-pound lump of maple sugar, returned to the attack.

"Josef!"

The man was coming up from the river-bank with a full cup in either hand, for this was a fishing trip, and we had not the refinements of permanent

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camp, such as an extra bucket of spring water under the table.

"*Oui, M'sieur Bob!*" he answered readily, and smiled, and I thought he had an air of knowing what was coming and that he was pleased with it.

"Josef, tell us about that old paper of your family. Don't you want to hear about Josef's paper, Walter?"

The new cast, neatly fastened on stiff snells, danced at me invitingly, but fishing was too strenuous just after such a luncheon; listening to Josef seemed an effort appropriate. "Yes. *Dites donc, Josef,*" I said.

Josef shrugged his shoulders again—the surface of him was all French, like the others. "M'sieur will probably think it little of a tale. It is, as I have said, that the paper is very old. One has kept it always in the family, for there is—how does one say it?—a tradition that it will bring luck. When my father died it became mine, for I am the oldest. So that one day I take it out of the little leaden box in which it has been always—a *drôle* of a little box, M'sieur, heavy and ancient also—and at that

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time I try to read it, but I cannot. But, yes ; I read French well, M'sieur, and also a little English, but this was not either. The brother of my wife, who has been a *chef* on a boat that sailed to Florida, and who has met a number of Spaniards—he says it is Spanish. I know not, I—it is possible. But the name at the end of the paper I could read easily, and it is, I believe, the name that M'sieur Bob said just now—Cor—Corte— *Tiens*, how was it that you said it, that name there, M'sieur Bob?”

And Bob repeated with satisfaction, “Gaspar Corte Real.”

“But, yes, it was without doubt that name itself,” said Josef, and the long heron's feather nodded as he shook his head in affirmation.

And suddenly Bob's legs seemed to fill the air with brown corduroy as he danced. “Here's the stuff!” he yelled. “It's the hidden treasure of Gaspar Corte Real, and the paper's going to show us the way to it!”

“Bob,” I interrupted, “stop that. Get out of the fish—you're spoiling the guides' lunch”—for even Josef looked worried and the others were in

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an anxious agony. It was the moment to apply the master hand. "Eat your lunch now, *tout de suite*," I ordered. "Josef, I'll talk to you afterward." I drew my excited young brother down to where two canoes lay drawn up on the rocks. "Give me a hand to lift this boat, Bob," I said. "I want you to paddle me for a cast or two at the mouth of the stream up there, while the men are lunching." Bob, who prides himself on his paddling, splashed water, and overran the fish hole, and, when we got a big trout on at last, let the canoe slip forward so that I could not reel in the slack, and lost my quarry. His mind was not on fish. And all the time he chattered, which if it does not scare the game, as Izaak Walton would have it, at least distracts the mind from that gentle and absorbing craft of angling which demands a peaceful spirit and the whole soul of him who would practise it. Consequently after fifteen vain minutes I gave up, and settled myself to have it out with the youngster.

"Cub," I said, "things like that don't happen. You've got 'Treasure Island' on the brain. That

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paper of Josef's you'll find is a receipt for cooking preserves, and I'd be willing to bet what you please that the signature is no more like Gaspar Corte Real than like Walter Morgan. You know what these guides are—unreliable and primed to go off at half-cock about anything. They are a superstitious, credulous lot, ready to believe any fairy story that strikes their fancy. You know that. Now what's the use of losing your mind over this? Besides, Corte Real was lost four hundred years ago, and how could a paper have lasted?"

"Parchment," Bob snapped at me. "Parchment. Why it's the very thing he would have had above all others. He was an explorer—a map-maker. He wouldn't stir an inch without his tools—now, would he?"

"The ink would have faded by now," I objected, but the boy fairly crowed.

"Ho, not much. Look at Egyptian papyruses. And those facsimiles of maps in the book—it said they were made from maps they've still got, of explorers before Columbus. What about that, hey?" And we went on a rock with a jar.

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"You needn't tip the boat over to emphasize the point," I said crossly, but Bob continued with serenity.

"Beg pardon. Yes, sir, Walter, there's a big chance that paper might be something wonderful—might be really Corte Real's writing—think of it!"

I had been thinking. "Listen, cub," I said. "It's absurd. Corte Real was here in 1500. The first permanent settler in these parts was Jacques Cartier in 1530. What do you make of those thirty years between? How did the paper get from his hands into those of the first ancestor of Josef, for instance?"

"I—I don't know," Bob stammered, with so saddened an accent that I was sorry. To kill the romance in the mind of youth is not a business which attracts me. I searched my mental processes for a step to let him down gently.

"Whoever got the paper from Gaspar Corte Real might possibly have lived with the Indians till the coming of Jacques Cartier," I suggested vaguely. "Or he might have made his way down



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the river to Newfoundland, where there were certainly Basque fishermen before Cartier."

Bob brightened at once. "Oh, yes! Yes, that's it; and he might have gone to France with the Basque fishermen and came back with Jacques Cartier—he naturally would come back with all that treasure to hunt for. I know I would," he said with decision. And then, fervently: "Walter—oh please, Walter, don't say no off the bat. Wait till you think."

"Say no to what?" I asked, bewildered.

"To what I'm going to say, of course," and the lad's face twitched with anxiety. "I want you to do something—more than I ever wanted anything."

It distresses me when Bob's voice trembles, for the boy and I are good friends and I think much of the friendship, and to make him happy is a thing I care about. Besides, it is so seldom he asks anything that I dislike to refuse.

"What is it?" I inquired in a colorless way which could not have been encouraging.

But Bob was not discouraged. "I want you,"

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he said solemnly, "to send Josef out to get that paper."

I looked at him in dismay. "But, Bob, that upsets our plans for a week. We were going to explore the Ghost River—you were keen about it."

"Yes, and I am," Bob answered firmly. "But how do you know this treasure may not be in the very country we are going to—it's safest to have the paper."

I could not refrain from laughing derisively at the fourteen-year-old expansiveness of this logic. "You poor little lunatic," I said, "the treasure, if there is any, may be in any spot of Canada as well as here. It's a large order. There's no earthly reason for thinking Corte Real came hereabouts."

"It's got to be somewhere near the coast," insisted Bob, and I laughed again, for the St. Lawrence coast-line is of a fair length. "And this is pretty near the St. Lawrence in spots, you know. And the Ghost River, Vézina said, runs straight into it. And, Walter, I've got another idea. Of course you'll laugh, but queer things do happen sometimes, and sometimes things fit and mean

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something, and a tradition has always a starting-place, and——”

“Cub, get to the point.”

“Oh, all right,” Bob agreed amiably. “This is what I’m after: do you remember what Vézina told us the other day about Ghost River?”

“No. Yes. Some story of an Indian tradition—I didn’t pay attention.”

“Well, I did,” stated the adventure seeker. “He said that Joe Véro, the Indian, told him that lots of ‘savages’ wouldn’t go on that river because there had been a saying for ages—‘*centaines d’annees*,’ he said—that white men had been killed there, and that their ghosts haunted the river. Golly!” Bob squealed suddenly; “ghosts—and treasures—and bones—and Spaniards—I never did hope for as good a time as this!”

I cast a reflective line down the stream and gave the lad time to recover.

“Walter, if you’ll send Josef out for that paper I’ll—I’ll be awfully glad.” It was unknowingly as strong an argument as he could use, but he felt it inadequate. “I can’t do anything for you that I

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can think of because I'm young—just a kid to you. But if you would, Walter, I would appreciate it, and I'd remember it always. And maybe some day I could do something to show you."

That is the way the boy undermines my common sense. I feel as a sneak thief when I hear him pleading and see him looking at me with such a simple acknowledgment of my superior and enormous power in his earnest eyes. I rapped him on the cap hurriedly with the tip of my rod, to the risk of catching the flies. "I don't want to be hired to do things for you, cub," I said. "And we're partners in the camping business. If we talk a thing over and decide between us that it's best to be done—it goes, that's all. We'll send Josef out for the paper if you want it so much—certainly, we will."

There was an undercurrent of selfishness in my decision. In fact, I owed to Bob at once that the chance of trying my hand at an ancient document had a charm. French as she is spoken is a weak point with me, and I should balk at Spanish conversation with a Castilian of a critical turn, but both languages I read readily, and it happens,

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curiously enough, that I have served an apprenticeship at old writings. The well-known Henry Adams Morgan who held until his death, only a few years ago, the chair of Early American History in Columbia, was my uncle. I spent a summer with him in the south of Spain during my college days, and the main business of the stay there was that Dr. Morgan might study from the archives certain manuscripts bearing on his book "Discoverers of America," then in preparation. I came quickly under the spell of the work, and while a two months' course did not make an expert of me, I learned enough to know where, in the lines and flourishes of the old papers, to look for the likenesses to, and the differences from modern writings. My uncle called me an apt scholar, and I took pride and pleasure in following up the blind trail of many an old ink path until the rays of light from this side and that dawned and joined and illuminated the hieroglyphic landscape. Therefore, once Bob had worked on my feelings so far as to get a promise, I was pleased and eager over the prospect of the paper.

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It was Josef himself who ran down to the water's edge when the canoe slipped inshore, to steady it for us as we disembarked.

"Josef," I asked, hitting straight from the shoulder, "will you go out to St. Anne's and get your paper?"

Josef's gleaming eyes widened with surprise at the suddenness of the proposal, but "*Mais oui, M'sieur,*" he answered cheerfully, and in five minutes it was planned.

Instead of keeping on with our trip we arranged to go back to camp at once, and the next morning, Tuesday, Josef left for St. Anne's, due to return on Saturday. The Sunday we would give ourselves to study the paper and on Monday, a week from date, we agreed to start out again in any case for Ghost River, perhaps as treasure-seekers, perhaps as simple explorers, according to the findings of the old writing.

To put over an expedition or to hurry it by a week makes little difference in camp. There are no engagements to be fitted in, and woods and waters and the peace of eternal hills are about the same

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in the log camp on Lac Lumière as in the tent on Ghost River. So we settled down contentedly to the quiet crowded with life, the monotone infinitely varied, of every-day in camp. I made a record catch of trout, Bob fell overboard into a bog and was extracted by the heels, we went on a five mile walk and found a new lake hidden in the hills—and then it was Saturday. As we lay reading, stretched out in the afternoon sunlight on the warm brown earth by the dock, there was a flicker on the water two miles down the lake, which was not jumping trout or diving kingfisher. One comes to know that sudden glint, different by some infinitesimal sharp difference from any other, the light on the blade of a paddle as it dips and rises. I saw Bob's vigorous young neck lift to look, and I followed his gaze and caught the unmistakable flash.

"There's Josef," said Bob.

With that there was a dark dot against the gray lake which was constant, which grew rapidly larger, and shortly we distinguished the guide's figure, the back bending at each stroke to "put the

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body into it," as the Canadian guides paddle. In a few minutes more he stood on the log landing, greeting us with a cheerful "*Bon jour, M'sieur—bon jour, M'sieur Bob.*" His restless eyes gleamed dark and brilliant, there was a touch of scarlet at his throat, the heron's feather was still sticking in his old gray felt slouch hat; the lean and muscular figure was full of dash and picturesqueness.

"Did you get the paper, Josef?" inquired Bob.

"*Mais oui, M'sieur Bob.*"

He was carefully drawing out a bundle of old cloth from an inside pocket of his coat, and as he unwrapped fold after fold, there was a dull gleam of metal, and a small flat box of lead, heavy and ancient looking, lay in his hands. With an air he presented it to me.

"It is the paper of two hundred years," he announced theatrically, and I confess to a thrill as I took it.

There was mail to be read that night, and then supper and the news of the club from Josef—all distractions. I ruled that the leaden box with its



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possibilities should not be opened until we could give it unhurried hours. Therefore next morning in Josef's presence, in the big log camp, with bars of sunlight pushing through the windows and lying goldenly on the floor, with Bob watching wide-mouthed, I opened the box and drew out delicately the old, old writing. It was as Josef had said, very brown with age, but the ink was dark, the lettering clear and sharp-cut. It was written in a flowing hand which seemed to me the evident careful hand of a draughtsman, knowing as I did that the old Portuguese was a maker of maps. It was in the Portuguese of the fifteenth century, which is practically the same as the Castilian Spanish of that period, the language, each of them, of the manuscripts I had studied with Dr. Morgan. Not at once could I read it—excepting always the signature—for I was out of practice, and perhaps even at my best might have had trouble. But at once I could decipher a word here and there, and from that work my way tortuously to parts of other words, to mere single letters sometimes, which were yet a point of vantage from which to attack their

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comrades. And each word, each letter, was a satisfaction, deepening as each joined his fellows in my battalion of the conquered. Consecutive words began to stand out from the puzzling context, and at times, after an hour of discouraging drudgery perhaps, I could slide a mosaic bit into its place, and see it tie together other unmeaning scraps, and see a part of the picture, a part of the sense, flash out on me with startling swiftness; and then were all the measured pains infinitely rewarded. It was more absorbing, more exciting, than one can realize who has not done it. Josef soon grew *en-nuyé* as he frankly stated, and melted unobtrusively into the woods toward the guides' camp, but faithful Bob stood by the colors through the fight, and his enthusiasm helped much. Often as well his quick imagination caught at a chance that proved lucky and gave us another letter, even another word. Hour after hour we worked, fascinated. The golden patches on the rough hewn floor grew shorter, slipped noiselessly away; the sun was in the south; it was time for the mid-day dinner.

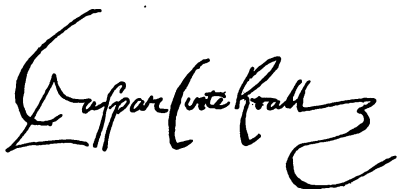
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Tired, but reluctant, we shut the priceless paper into its box, and went through the shadowy woods trail to the dining camp, even Bob quiet with the intensity of his interest. We finished our meal in the open with unusual despatch, our minds both still in the camp, following still the twists and mysterious windings of the brown old writing.

Then, fresher in body and mind, back we rushed to the attack, and behold! the worst was over. Great segments of sentences fell together as by magic, and the story, more dramatic, more thrilling to us than any ever written, began suddenly to flow into sequence, and we caught our breath at times as if we had been of the hunted men who stood about Gaspar Corte Real as he wrote it. There had been no uncertainty from the first as to his signature; it stood in bold letters which had not—could not puzzle even Josef. That this may be appreciated I give here a facsimile which bears, as any one taking the trouble to compare them may see, a close likeness to the authentic signatures of the Portuguese captain preserved in certain manuscripts in Lisbon and reproduced, to cite only one

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authority, in Justin Winsor's "Christopher Columbus." This is the facsimile:



The name in Josef's manuscript is more carefully written, in my judgment, and consequently more easily read than any other signature of Corte Real's which I have been able to find. However that may be, it stood in clear writing as he had signed it, in the last ditch—the writing the last act, save a short desperate fight, of an adventurous life.

For Bob was right. This was a question of hidden treasure. It seems to me as I write it to-day an incredible, an almost ridiculous account to put into sober English words of the twentieth century—but yet it is true. The man who wrote the paper told in bare, dramatic style a tale such as Bob had dreamed, of mutiny and treachery and savages and treasure, and—by implication—of a tragic death

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following closely on the writing. I give here the paper translated as exactly as I could do it:

“For my nephew, Alonzo Corte Real: In the midst of the river, five hundred feet above the great white fall, stands a rock which has in its top a hole. In that rock my six men and I have taken refuge from the savages who, bent on our blood, have followed us from the far distant coast. We have now no victuals; they are on our track and will shortly finish us. But before I die I wish to write for Alonzo Corte Real, who could not escape with us, and who alone the natives will not harm because he saved the life of their chief’s daughter, this narrative of my end and of the hiding of the treasure which was destined for the king. I shall leave this paper on my body, and I know that you, Alonzo Corte Real, my nephew, will prevent the savages from mutilating me, and will so find it. I also leave to you, Alonzo Corte Real, my command to find out the traitor Vincenzo Alima and kill him because he caused the mutiny and set the savages against us and because—may God punish him!—he seized my ship with his mutineers and

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left me and my good men to the savages. That he sink on the high sea before he come to Portugal is my prayer, but if he survive I charge you, Alonzo, to follow and kill him, wherever he may be.

“This is where I have hidden the treasure. You will find the rock again because of the two strange mountains which almost meet over the river. The river runs through a cleft between them. Also there is a great echo. On the right side is a mountain of the shape of a tower, and on the left side is a mountain of the shape of an elephant’s head, with the trunk very plain. I have not seen two such mountains together in the world. An hour’s journey above these is the great white fall, and near the beaver dam is the rock. Under the rock on the side where the water foams against it and close to the water’s edge is a deep hollow of the size and shape of a coffin. In this we have set the box, and lest the high waters of spring wash away even its great weight we have all together set on it a stone round of one end and carven at the other. At the bottom of the box is the sword which the king gave me. That is for you, but you who read this will render

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to his Majesty the rest, the sole remnant of that great treasure which I carried in my ship for the king.—Gaspar Corte Real.”

“You who read this”—as that sentence stood out I felt as if the gruff voice of the captain had spoken it in my ear. The wording was so direct, so soldierly, that the writer’s personality rose from it as salt rises to the nostrils from a sea-soaked garment.

The boy and I were silent a long moment, considering the courage of the man who had calmly composed these words in the close face of a violent death; considering the loyalty which had remembered to guard the king’s property in the depths of an unknown world, with a world more unknown but a step beyond his journeying feet.

Bob spoke first, as is his custom. “Good!” he observed with a whole soul. “Good! Vincenzo Alima got drowned. I’m glad of that.”

The deduction seemed logical. It appeared that two modern American citizens had by an off chance happened on the answer to one of the problems of history. The lost ship of Gaspar Corte Real,



"You who read this."





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loaded with treasure, had been one of the mysteries of the middle ages, a mystery which had troubled the minds of mariners and kings, which had caught the attention of every writer of those times, which had remained to this day unsolved. And the answer to the four-hundred-year-old question had waited these centuries in the humble home of a line of Canadian farmers.

"How did Josef's people ever come by the paper?" I wondered aloud, and Bob's eyes, fastened on the signature, flashed up at me.

"I see it, I see it!" he cried. "Walter, don't you see? It's his name—Corte Real—Cortral—Josef Cortral—it's the same thing shortened."

I stared at the boy stupidly. The thing was so obvious that my understanding halted before it in scorn. How could anyone have missed so conspicuous a link in the chain of evidence? "It certainly looks that way," I agreed reluctantly to Bob's eager challenge, and the cub, encouraged, went on:

"He's the evidential descendant of 'Alonzo Corte Real, my nephew.' Walter, don't you suppose he married that chief's daughter whose life he saved?"

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As bits of bright and pale colored glass in the kaleidoscope slide, shift, fall into a clear pattern, so the few facts and the infinite possibilities of this alive scrap from a dead world, prisoned in its rock, as the toad of the geologist, for centuries—so the fate of Gaspar Corte Real and his treasure slowly took form and place, drew together, fell scrap by scrap within my mind into a picture, a story.

“He naturally would have married that chief’s daughter,” Bob added wistfully, as one who out of a great experience in marrying yet deferred to my greater. And reflecting on expatriated men among lower races, I thought he naturally would.

Step by step through the darkness of the past, stumbling among the few records of early Canadian days, we constructed a tentative historical romance which must, for this world, serve the purpose. I look forward to verifying it by word of mouth from Gaspar Corte Real some day if happily the old captain and I win at the last to one port.

We planned, Bob and I, first that Vincenzo Alima, as was right, should have gone down at

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sea. We sunk him to the bottom with his mutineers and his stolen ship and his tainted treasure, and thought no more of him. We turned our attention then to Alonzo Corte Real, whom we married comfortably to a brown princess. We let him live for years as a chief with her and her people; contented, indeed, in a way, but yet always with the inner restlessness which a civilized man must have who has dropped an octave down the scale to barbarism; always with a note sounding in his conscience which rose at times to a bugle call, summoning him home to a higher fate, home to obey the command of his uncle and wreak vengeance on the traitor Alima; home to end his days among white faces of his own sort. So that after years of struggle between unrest and drift we made him, Bob and I, succumb to a race instinct stronger than *laissez aller* and, sick of savagery, escape from his adopted tribe, taking with him a boy, his son. We made him reach by canoe, down the St. Lawrence the boats of the Basque fishermen, already, years before Jacques Cartier, taking great catches of cod off the Newfoundland banks. With them we had him return

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to Europe and spend years in a search for Alima, well buried in mid-ocean. We were both inclined to have him die at last in Spain, leaving as a legacy to his son, christened Gaspar by us, the old paper, and at this point Bob's imagination broke its tether and raced away.

"And the rest is easy. Gaspar came back on one of the Jacques Cartier trips"—as if Cartier had managed summer excursions to Canada—"and settled down like a Frenchman on a little farm, and married, and shortened the name to Cortral. And he nor his children seemed ever to get a day off to go and hunt for the treasure; but he made this little box to hold the paper, and it was handed down from generation to generation, each one getting vaguer as to what it was about, but all of them keeping it carefully because they are so superstitious and because it was supposed to bring luck. Till at last *v'là* Josef and us—and the paper. It took four hundred years to get us together, but here we are, by golly, and I'm glad I'm in it!"

"It is interesting, Bob," I said, "but there are

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two things which take practical value from it for us."

"What?" demanded Bob, resting one foot on the book-shelf, and regarding me with startled eyes.

"One is that there is no hint even as to what river of all the rivers in Canada was the scene of Gaspar Corte Real's death. And another is that even if we could find the river and the rock, the chances are strong that winter snows and spring floods have washed away all signs of the treasure."

With that Bob was begging pitifully. "Oh Walter, don't—don't say you won't go just because there mightn't be anything. We have got so far it would be too mean to give it up now. Come on, Walter—say you'll come—let's be good sports and have a try, anyway. Don't let's be babies and say we won't just because it's a risk. Come on, Walter."

"Where?" I asked. "Do you propose to search every river in Canada from mouth to source for hidden treasure?"

The lad's yellow head was bent over my translation of the manuscript. "There was something about that," he murmured to himself. And then:

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"Here it is—here it is, Walter. Listen, Walter." I listened as he read. "You will find this rock again because of the two strange mountains which almost meet over the river. The river runs through a cleft between them. Also there is a great echo. On the right side is a mountain of the shape of a tower, and on the left side is a mountain of the shape of an elephant's head, with the trunk very plain. I have not seen two such mountains together in the world.' " The boy lifted eyes glowing with conviction to my face. "Walter, I know that's the Ghost River," he addressed me solemnly. "That old, old—*b'en b'en vieux*"—he lapsed into Canadian *patois*, in which he had heard the story—"the *b'en b'en vieux* tradition of the savages about the ghosts of white men who were killed on that river isn't an accident. I believe—I believe"—he grew pink and stammered—"I believe we'll find Corte Real's bones, and his men's bones, and treasure enough to make all the guides rich for life." Personal riches to Bob himself was as yet an indifferent question. He disconnected his foot sharply from the library. "I'm going straight to the guides' camp and ask all the

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men if there isn't a place on the Ghost River with mountains like that. They've all been there except 'Poléon."

"Wait a minute, cub," I restrained him. "You know they'll swear to anything if you put it in their minds. Give them a chance to tell the truth. Bring them over here and let me ask them."

In five minutes a procession of five, Bob capering at its head, streamed out of the trail which led from the men's quarters to ours. Spitting carefully to one side as they entered, pulling off respectfully their dingy old hats, and treading softly with an air of penetrating the inner sanctuaries of a palace, the men filed into the log camp and stood before me, surprised, curious, cheerfully ready to do anything I might order.

"I want to ask all of you," I said, "whether you have ever been on a river in Canada that looks like this"—and I put into French as well as I might, Corte Real's description of the stream and the two mountains. When I came to the echo I saw Vézina and his brother Zoetique suddenly look at each other, but it was Josef who spoke as I finished.



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"*Mais oui*," he said quickly. "I have seen that place, I. It is well the Rivière des Revenants—the river of ghosts. The two mountains are of that appearance."

A suppressed sound from Bob expressed his triumph, and shy Zoetique lost his shyness in excitement.

"Le Tour—*Tête d'Éléphant*," he murmured.

Vézina glanced a trifle sullenly at the quicker and more brilliant Josef, but was too conscientious to alter his evidence. "It is that, M'sieur," he said in his soft voice. "It is that river—the Ghost River. We know those mountains, Zoetique and I—and the echo. It is not agreeable, that echo. It is as of the ghosts. Indeed, one cannot tell, for assuredly they are there—ah yes! It has always been said, therefore it is the truth. It is not a good place to camp at night, M'sieur. One has never spent a night there, *par exemple*."

"We will try to get there by daylight," I remarked, "but we are going."

"The ghosts won't get you if I'm along, Vézina," Bob assured him cheerfully. "There never was a

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ghost in the same landscape with me in all my checkered career." And considering him, I felt that the breezy ozone of this world which moved with the lad might well blow away such thinner atmosphere as emanates from a world of spirits.

The next morning we set out, and that night we camped far up on Ghost River. Josef was almost as filled with enthusiasm as Bob, though of a repressed and silent sort, but there were plain signs of disaffection in the others, and so nervous and alarmed was their manner as our camp-making ran to the boundary-line of late twilight and early moonlight that I had their tent pitched close to ours to give them confidence. One camp-fire served for all, and as we sat about it, smoking our old pipes and telling stories, which I held carefully to a mid-day standard of cheerfulness, in a pause between two sentences a long howl came so suddenly out of the forest that it surprised me into a startled movement. I laughed, but Vézina and Zoetique and 'Poléon huddled together instinctively, their faces pale, their eyes staring out beyond the rim of fire-light.

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"What sort of an animal was that?" I asked, and Josef answered quietly, throwing a brief glance of disdain at his comrades.

"It was a wolf, all simply, M'sieur," he said. "The savage, Joe Véro, he told me that there were many in this part of the woods this year. It is because of the great fires in the south, toward Lac Ste. Angèle, where the wolves have been always of great numbers, that they are driven here. Yet they are not dangerous, one knows that. They fear us more than we fear them," and he cast another swift glance at the three Frenchmen.

Vézina shrugged his shoulders. "Not of danger if they are but wolves as other wolves," he murmured. "I have not fear of natural creatures, me, *par exemple*."

With that Bob laughed a great boyish "Ha, ha!" which made the men shiver nervously. "Listen to it! What should they be but natural creatures? You're not going to have ghosts of wolves as well as ghosts of Spaniards up this one poor little river, are you?" and he began to laugh again.

But Vézina held up a hand with such a stricken

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face of pleading that it stopped him; and as the guide opened his lips to speak a screech-owl hooted, and close upon it came again, and nearer, that long unearthly wailing. The three men crowded toward us as if they believed that the soul of Corte Real himself was abroad seeking his lost treasure.

Bob's natural young voice broke the strained silence. "That fellow is a blame good howler," he observed, and the frightened guides drew a long breath and Vézina showed his access of courage by getting up to throw a handful of birch bark on the fire. Bob chuckled a bit, unconscious of the bad moment which he had averted. "Vézina, did you think that howling was a *loup-garou*?" he asked.

And with that something happened which, fitting as it did to the strained tension of the superstitious men, was extraordinary and uncomfortable.

The blaze of the birch bark just thrown on went out quickly, and a log fell away at the moment, scattering the others, leaving us suddenly in partial darkness. Coming after the intense light it seemed more profound, and it was as if the firelight had

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been turned off and moonlight turned on at a touch, for the whole breeze-swept forest stirred with mystical white fingers. An opening of an old windfall ran from us to the river, and there came from this glade a loud, sharp crash of a broken limb. Every eye turned to the spot. In the path of the moon, black against the white-lighted river, high on a pedestal of storm-felled tree-trunks, stood a big wolf. Still as death the wild thing regarded us, and still as death we stared back, and then with a spring I was in my tent, and with another I was back, rifle in hand.

I cannot remember loading or cocking, but I remember seeing the dark mass at the end of the barrel and I remember the shot dying in the hills. If I had hit, if we had dragged a dead animal into camp, all would have been simple. But I missed. Without sound, or so the men said, the creature melted into the silver forest and left me a set of frightened children to handle. Josef indeed was reasonable, but the others were in a pitiable state.

"It was—it was"—Vézina stammered through clicking teeth, "it was the—*loup-garou*," and he

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gazed at me with big childish eyes as if begging me to contradict.

I knew the hold on the French Canadian of the old superstition of the were-wolf which roams the forests of Canada, and I knew the trouble it would make if these fellows were allowed to indulge their fears. I tried to think how, most quickly, I could quiet them, but Bob saved me the trouble.

He kicked the logs briskly into a blaze. "Stuff, Vézina," he said calmly. "It was an old dog-wolf that was hungry and smelled our grub—that's what it was. But let's have it the *loup-garou*—it's more interesting. Bully for you, Vézina—it's a heap more fun to believe things are something, isn't it?" And Vézina, between surprise and shame and the sudden cold bath of common sense, rose up sheepishly and went about splitting a spruce chunk.

The situation for the moment was saved, the *morale* of my company, while not made over, was patched up, and the men turned in shortly with no more talk of ghosts of man or beast. Yet I knew well that trouble was simmering and that with any fuel added to the fire it would quickly boil up and

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over, and this consciousness made me sleep restlessly. I awoke in the middle of the night at the sound of a movement, and from one drowsy eye I saw Bob, on his camp cot, pull himself sleepily from his blankets. The fire had burned low, and the light about the tent was dim and full of brown shadows; there was a deep undertone of chill in the air—I do not remember a colder August night. I lay motionless, and watched the boy go shivering outside, leaving the flap of the tent hanging open; I watched him as he softly pushed the noses of the burned logs together and I saw them catch and blaze up brightly; I saw his shadow as he stood beyond the fire sharp on the guides' tent opposite ours, and I marked its arms wave in fantastic length across the canvas, as Bob waved his flesh-and-blood arms to get warm. Then, as he turned to come to bed, I saw him stumble against a root and fall softly forward on all fours, and I smiled to myself as he came walking so into the tent, like a long-legged weird beast too sleepy and too lazy to straighten himself again. I heard his grunt of satisfaction as he slipped into the

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blankets like a comforted young animal as he was, and I fell asleep with broad splashes of new firelight painting the tent walls yellow, and a soothing warmth sinking into the marrow of my bones.

This midnight scene was commonplace enough, but in the morning the guides told a wonderful story. They had wakened with a cold chill on them, something quite different, they assured me, from the ordinary cold of the night air, and suddenly the fire had blazed up brightly with no mortal hand to feed it, for were they not all there in the tent, they whose business alone it was to keep the fire going? And by this unearthly illumination they had seen Corte Real's ghost, which had waved long arms of warning toward them—warning them to go home, to leave him undisturbed. And as he dissolved into the darkness, behold! the hell-wolf, the *loup-garou*, followed him—they had seen it distinctly, or at the least its shadow on the tent, and it had legs long of an immensity, and a horrible head shaped like a man's. At which last Bob could contain himself no longer, but rolled on the ground and shouted such human boy laughter as the Ghost



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River had not heard before. And with that I explained; sharply and indignantly, for I was out of patience with this nonsense, yet clearly and in detail, I explained.

But this time neither my authority nor Bob's ridicule prevailed. It was a stampede; the men refused to go farther, and insisted that with or without me they would go back to camp. They valued their lives, they told me—of what use would be the treasure found if they died finding it? They had had their warning—they would obey. Ah, no! M'sieur was mistaken, and also M'sieur Bob. It was not M'sieur Bob whom they had seen—they were certain. They could tell by the feeling in here—and they thumped their calico shirt-fronts. One has that feeling only for such things as are not of this world. And again Bob's great laugh rang into the forest, but to my mind the development was not funny. He and I could indeed go on alone, but with great discomfort, and I did not wish to do it. However, the mutineers, while respectful, were firm, and at last I gave in.

"Go back, then, you cowards," I said angrily,

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"and M'sieur Bob and I will go on alone, and if anything is found you will have not a cent of it. M'sieur Bob and I will go alone," I repeated.

Josef Cortral's eyes lifted to mine with a flash. "But no, M'sieur. I go with the messieurs."

It was settled so, and we shipped the scared wretches on the back trail with one canoe, and Bob, Josef and myself, glad in a way to be rid of their unwilling service, started down the Ghost River for treasure-trove. It was a windy, bright August morning and the little river, frilled here and there with tossing grasses, here and there set in a jewelled border of pink gray rocks, rippled and sparkled. Down, down floated the canoe, slipping through lesser rapids, carried on Josef's wet head through fringing forests around the greater. Till at last, from far away, the boom of a mass of water pressed against our ears. Josef turned and gave me a look of significance.

"It is the great white fall one hears, M'sieur."

But our journey lay beyond. There might be other white falls on the Ghost River—we must identify this one by the mountains below it. With

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the throbbing roar of the falling water shutting out the world like a curtain of sound, we portaged around the cataract and stood below to wonder at it. The foaming sheet was like nothing so much as a blanket of white flannel moving slowly downward, fringed at its end, for at the lower edge the water broke into a rampart of rocks, and a tumble of yellow foam finished it.

"M'sieur," Josef spoke, "it is this that must be the fall of Corte Real. On this river there are no more as high. There is but one half as high and that one, M'sieur, is not white."

Still down we went, for I must see the mountains before believing, and suddenly, around a turn, I saw them. Like the remnant of a castle the tower stood up gray and square, and across from it sloped to the stream the curve of an elephant's trunk drawn in granite, unmistakable. The flap of the ear was a ledge that zigzagged down; the small eye was a black cavern; the likeness must have struck the dullest, the least prepared imagination.

And all at once we ran into the echo, for as Bob's laugh broke out it was sent back like a

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blow from the hanging cliffs, and a rock opposite caught it, and we drifted astonished, confounded, to hear the spirits of the mountains mock us again and again in familiar tones. It was so swift, so violent, so insulting that I could understand Vé-zina's horror of it. I had no love for this echo.

We turned and followed back our bubbling wake up the black waterway which the fugitives had taken four hundred years before us, and as we climbed the steep ascent around the fall, Josef's figure leading us, capped with the canoe, was like a giant mushroom which slid through sifting sun and shifting shadow of the ever-opening gateway of the woods. Then we searched. Till the sun had marched past the south we searched for a rock of proper size which had a hole in its top. The beaver dam spoken of in the paper was gone, probably centuries before, so we were short one landmark. We searched till at last our hunger for adventure went down before the sudden hunger for food, and we camped for lunch where we happened to be, on an island which lay in a widening of the river, where the river played at being a lake about the

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little land. We had scurried over it, looking as everywhere for the hollow, but with no success, and at last Josef set composedly to work to build the fire and to cook the trout which we had just taken.

Bob surveyed the landscape at his lordliest, legs wide, hands in trousers pockets, lips drawn to a contemplative whistle. "It's an ideal place for a last stand," he remarked as one who made last stands a specialty. "You could watch all around and the savages couldn't shoot at you from the mainland—it's too far. If I'd been G. Corte Real I'd have picked this place. If only there was a hole in the silly old rock we would be O.K.," he ruminated. "But instead of a hole there's a heap of stones."

Suddenly he was off like a goat, scrambling up the steep side of the island, while I, having only one guide, settled myself to help Josef get lunch. There was a long cessation of bulletins from Bob and I forgot him in the immediate interest, but suddenly I heard a shout and he came rushing pell-mell, scattering stones as he fell upon us.

"Walter! I've found it—it's up there! Brace—hustle!" and he had me by the arm.

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"Calm yourself, Bob. Don't let your feelings get you by the throat," I said, and I turned the potatoes with a spoon. "What have you found—the treasure?"

Bob's excitement was proof against sarcasm. "All but," he proclaimed. "Cut out the teasing, Walter, please, for it's really important. It's"—he made a dramatic pause—"the hole."

"Have you found a hole?" I inquired and shook salt upon the cooking.

"Not *a* hole—the hole." At the boy's tone I looked up. "Walter—I'm serious," he half pleaded, half commanded.

It came to leaving the potatoes. With lunch ready for human destruction, we left it to elemental ruin, for Bob's eloquence convinced us that if the hole of history was actually just above us, it had awaited us already a long time and we could in decency keep it no longer. We plunged up the bank. It was as Bob had said. Five minutes removed every doubt as we tore away rock after rock of the *débris* which had disguised the depression of which Bob had divined the presence. A hollow

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half as high as a man, ten feet in width, lay beneath a tangle of bushes, and already the boy had chopped away underbrush and torn away stones enough to shadow out its shape, and at once we burrowed to our elbows and excavated.

So that at three o'clock we went back to a lunch which must be rebuilt from the foundation, knowing that we were on the very scene of the last fight and that somewhere close to us had been hidden "the treasure" which Corte Real had "carried for the King." Whether any part of it might still be there was the question which we had to answer.

We hurried again to our problem, and in half an hour I was well discouraged, for the vagueness of the work, for the lack of a starting-point.

"Under this rock on the side where the water foams against it and close to the water's edge," Corte Real had written, "is a deep hollow of the size and shape of a coffin. In this we have set the box, and lest the high waters of spring might wash away even its great weight, we have all together set on it a stone round of one end and carven of the other."

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These were our directions; explicit enough as we read them in camp on Lac Lumière, but here on the spot they left us at sea. "The side where the water foams against it," was, as nearly as we could place it, the east coast of the island—a zigzag broken line of perhaps an eighth of a mile. This we explored again and again fruitlessly. The whole island was a jagged rock, about whose outskirts clustered many other rocks of many sizes. There were interstices of all forms between them, but a hole at the water's edge "of the size and shape of a coffin" there was not.

At length behind the spires of the spruces the sun was an orange ball; the nearest mountain lifted a black hand across its face and blotted out all but a fiery eye; the sun was gone. Hurriedly we made camp, with no talk now of the treasure, with our high hopes burning low, with a weight of physical weariness holding down all the spring of ambition. There might be treasure or there might not; there certainly was hunger and thirst and aching of muscles. So that we fell into our blankets, three tired human beings, content with rest,



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stretched on sweet-smelling balsam; hushed by the drowsy magic of firelight; sung to sleep by the crackling of birch logs; sentinelled by solemn amphitheatres, circling far, of everlasting hills.

It seemed five minutes after I had fallen asleep that I was aware of Bob, who crawled out of his blankets, knocking over my rifle as he came. It was this noise which roused me. The lad bristled with schemes as a porcupine with quills, and I grumbled inarticulately at him, without curiosity, but with plenty of irritation at being disturbed. Then from under the lid of one eye I saw gray dawn creep in mist over the rim of a dark world and enter the door of the tent. Josef lifted his black head.

*"Qu'est-ce que c'est, M'sieur Bob?"* he demanded alertly, and the boy answered in a low voice.

*"Rien—rien du tout. Go to sleep, Walter—it's nothing."*

"Don't wake up the camp at this hour," I complained, and was asleep again.

The next thing I knew was bright sunshine which dripped goldenly through the leafy well and

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spattered all over the tent. There was a sound, which seemed to have brought it. The sound was my brother's voice. He spoke my name, and that was all—quietly, too, yet there was something in the tone which startled me. I lifted my head almost before my eyes opened, and I knew, although I did not look, that the guide had waked as well. Bob, in a parlous state as to costume, stood before us; his face shone, and in his hand he held out an extraordinary thing.

I rubbed my eyes. No, I was not dreaming; the strange object persisted in its incredible form; a ray of light coming through a hole in the tent struck a red flash from a jewel; the curved guard, the grip for the hand, was there, the long shining blade—a sword.

With a leap I stood staring at the illogical thing which the boy held, with which he ripped the air in swift crescents. Then I saw that the blade which shone so brilliantly was nothing more than a peeled birch branch; but it was fixed, with a wad of bark, into the socket of a sword hilt, a hilt set with colored stones.

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"Bob," I gasped, and rubbed my eyes again, "Bob—what's that? What's that thing?" and I heard Josef whisper:

*"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"*

Bob was sobered a bit with the greatness of his success, for he stopped swishing the blade and spoke low and slow: "Walter," he announced solemnly, "it's the sword—it is, really. It's the sword the king gave to Gaspar Corte Real. I found the hole in the rock, the hole like a coffin, and this was in it—I don't know what else—I didn't wait. I thought you'd like to help find the rest."

The boy had done what neither of two grown men, neither the man trained in woodcraft nor the man trained in evidence had done—he had used his mind. The beaver-dam of which Corte Real had spoken was gone; with its going the water of the stream must have lowered certainly inches, perhaps feet; the coffin-shaped hole which had been at the river's edge must now be well above it. Bob, lying awake in the night, had so worked out the problem, and at crack of dawn he was up and off to verify his theory. I looked at the boy with pride.

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He stood before us an easy victor, unconscious of the victory, radiant with pleasure, young enough to play at a sword with a birch branch, old enough to use brains and energy and muscle to fight a puzzle to a finish. I was conscious of a thrill of satisfaction at the thought that the lad was born to arrive, born with the power and the wish to make that one effort more which many a time wins the game.

It would have been a dramatic picture had there been an audience to see, far in the wild depths of a Canadian forest, two men in toilets of the hastiest, facing on their knees the rising sun and grasping each, as if it were part of his orisons, a leg whose upper attachments were immersed in earth. The opening which Bob had found was mostly covered. Over the original aperture had fallen a large rock blocking all but an irregular space of two feet, and taking the place, as a lid to the treasure-trove, of the original stone, "round at one end and carven at the other." This other stone we believed that we found later in the day, some yards downstream where ice and water had

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undoubtedly carried it. So that, the form of its covering being changed, the hiding-place was even blinder than it had a right to be. Blinder but more accessible, for the "carven" stone must have fitted it closely, and not even a lithe snake of a boy could have wriggled his way in, which is what Bob had done. The hole freed from underbrush, he had plunged down head-foremost, gripping behind him with prehensile toes, and clawing ahead of him in the darkness until his hands caught the hilt with which he emerged.

Now, down he went again, in spite of remonstrance, the moment we reached the spot, and all that Josef and I could do was to hold our breath and his feet till he saw fit to come up, this time empty-handed. The sword had been lodged alone in the crevice in the rocks; the blade had rusted quite away in the cold and heat, the winter and summer of still years, and only the hilt, which was of gold, was left.

Breakfast was a short ceremony that morning, and afterward the hours flew as we labored with our might to lift the great stone. At last with a

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slow crash, it escaped from our levers of birch and rolled majestically down, and sent up a cloud of spray as it fell into the stream. The coffin-shaped hole lay open before us; it was ours to unearth at will its aged secrets.

But at this point the fairy-story halted. The glittering promise of Bob's initial discovery was lamely kept, for the hilt itself seemed to be the main salvage. There were indeed enough signs, even without it, that here had been treasure-trove: there was a copper corner of charming antique workmanship from the box, there were heavy handles of the same metal by which it had been carried; but the layers on layers of gold coins, the bars of precious metal, the heaps of diamonds and rubies which we looked for with eyes starting from our heads—these were not there.

If ever they had been there, and I believe, indeed, that in some sort they must have been, the ice of many winters and high waters of many springs, indifferent to gold and jewels as to sand and pebbles, had long ago washed them away. Strewn, perhaps, among the stones of the lonely

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windings of the unknown river, buried in the soil of its remotest shallows, swept long ago down to the *fleuve*, the broad St. Lawrence—who could tell now where might be the treasure of Corte Real? Silver trout flashed scarlet fins over bright jewels, hoofs of caribou slipped on bars of Indian gold, nodding ferns clutched in fresh earthy arms coins of old Spain, and flaunted emerald flags above the secret. Far and wide, beyond hope of finding forever, the treasure was lost.

Yet not all of it was lost. The boy, diving here and there in corners, digging, prodding, suddenly caught his stick in a shapeless mass deep in a crevice. He was upon it instantly, tooth and nail, and soon we had unearthed and pried apart a number of small gold coins. We separated and scraped and cleaned them and slid them through our fingers and feasted our eyes on them, Josef's shining avariciously. At a guess I believed that the whole, the money, the sword hilt, and the small jewels with which it was set, might be worth four or five hundred dollars.

"And you're the heir, Josef," Bob announced.

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"You're the head of the house of Corte Real, and this is your heritage."

Josef lifted his bright, sharp eyes quickly from their contemplation of the coins, and they flashed doubt, defiance, question, at me. I had already considered this issue of the discovery, and had already rejoiced, considering it, that the value of our find was no greater. About the laws of treasure-trove in Canada I was most uncertain, but about the ethical, the reasonable right in a matter of a little jewelry and a few hundred dollars in gold I felt clear in my own mind. That this humble Frenchman, for so he was practically, was the collateral descendant and the heir of the old soldier who had died fighting in this wild place—of this I was sure; but I was sure also that I could not prove it. Far be it from me to create a tempest in a teapot, to turn the search-light of the law on this small dim spot of legality by discussing the question. I could look after Josef and his treasure and not bother anyone. So I smiled reassuringly.

"M'sieur Bob is right, I believe, Josef. It isn't an immense fortune, but I believe that, as the



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descendant of Alonzo Corte Real, what we have found should be yours."

Josef drew a long breath, and his hands and shoulders flew into quick, expressive French gestures. "I am content, M'sieur," he said. "I believe well also that M'sieur is right and that he is very just. I have been a poor man always. I have worked hard. This"—he touched lightly the old-world pieces of money and they clinked a quick response in a mellow, metallic voice—"this will make of my life another matter. It seems much to me, M'sieur. I can now live my dream."

The man's aquiline, notable face, the face which had come down to him from men who had done notable things, was radiant, and Bob and I were touched; we forbore to question him as to the "dream" which he would now realize. It seemed a bit sacrilegious to open the door unasked on a man's secret hopes. We felt that Josef Corte Real had won his little fortune and his great, old, new name rightfully, by the courage and the loyalty which he had shown beyond his class, which had been qualities of the old discoverer's as

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well, and which it was good to see had not been lost in the shuffle of the centuries. We hoped and argued from this finer vein of him that the unknown "dream" might be of a sort to lift him a step higher, toward his origin.

I took the coins and the sword hilt and the rest to New York and realized for them something more than Josef could have gotten in Quebec. The hilt, with its jewels intact, he allowed me to buy, and it hangs now on my library wall, my proudest possession. A few old coins also Bob and I bought from the lot as souvenirs, and I sent Josef a check for the whole well in excess of my first surmise.

Last summer when I wrote to Canada for guides I specified among others Josef Cortral or Corte Real, but the club steward, in answering, said that Josef was no longer on his list. Since he had become rich—the steward said—he had moved to Quebec, and had gone into business there. He gave me his street and number. So when I reached the old walled city I strolled down from the heights of the Frontenac, where stood once the Chateau of St. Louis, and wandered about in a tangle of

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steep, antiquated ways, till by diligent inquiry I came upon the place I looked for. As I turned the corner, a sign newer, more striking than its fellows met my eye, and I stood transfixed. The heir of the old Portuguese had indeed come into his own, and had realized his dream. Opportunity being given by the high gods, Josef Corte Real showed the high gods the stuff that was in him. The sign read

### GASPAR CORTE REAL'S SON CAKES AND PASTRIES

Which was stretching the family history a bit sidewise, perhaps, but which at least demonstrated the family pride.

And suddenly the quaint and narrow street, with its new sign so full of comedy and of pathos, had faded, and, with a great sense of the futility of life, of its pitiful waste of heroism, its mighty heedlessness of loyalty and devotion, I saw a vision. I saw a little river in a lonely forest, a little river that ran down singing to a "great white fall." I saw set in the rapids a "rock with a hole in the top"; in that feeble fortification I saw a knot of

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hunted men standing to meet a savage death in  
they knew not what wild land, they knew not what  
leagues from home; one by one I saw them fall,  
with grim faces turned to an alien sky, to keep  
the gold already stained with blood, to guard the  
treasure which Gaspar Corte Real had "carried in  
his ship for the king."



# **THE BIG BATEESE**



## THE BIG BATEESE

*COMMENT, M'sieur?* But no, *merci, M'sieur*. I do not need a chair, if M'sieur pleases. I can sit quite comfortably here on the woodpile back of the big stove, and it is also pleasantly warm here, for there is a little current of air which enters the camp by the open door—there—but M'sieur wishes the door open? *Très bien, M'sieur*. Also it is convenient to light my pipe from time to time with a bit of the burning wood from the fire. But yes, M'sieur, I can hold a red-hot coal quite easily in the palm for a moment—*v'là, M'sieur*. It is a trick we have, we others, *habitants*. Also I am tough, me, and hard and strong.

“What, M'sieur? ah, yes, the story. M'sieur wishes me to tell it in my own words, and he will then write it in English, following as closely as might be after my speech? But that is a *drôle* of an idea, M'sieur—that amuses me. Why should



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M'sieur wish to follow my language, who am an ignorant man, and know only the ordinary words of the French-Canadian farmer? More interesting, M'sieur? It is difficult to believe. Yet I will do as M'sieur wishes, and at least the story itself is, I believe it well, of interest. For there is no man in our village who has been this year so fortunate and so happy as I, Bateese Beauramé. There are men in the great cities, no doubt, who have gained more money—certainly I know that. And there may be some one who has married a girl as pretty and as smart as Julie—my wife—yet that I must doubt. But for us others, poor people, one considers that it is a grand fortune which has fallen to me. And also there is no one who will deny—or at the least he will not deny it when I am of the company—that Julie Gagnon looks finer in her clothes of Sunday, and works harder and more gayly in her cotton dress of every day, than any girl of all Ste. Anne. Julie herself laughs always when I say that, M'sieur, but yet I know always that it pleases her. But concerning the other, the wonderful gift of the fat M'sieur, she does not laugh concerning

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that—oh no! She becomes very serious and her eyes, which are extremely large and black, grow as saucers for size, and she shakes her head earnestly.

“‘It is enchantment! It is as a tale of the fairies,’ she says always.

“It is because of an idea of hers, because she is set—‘*tanné*’—on the thought that it should be written down as a story out of a book, that I am repeating to you, M’sieur, just what it was that happened. Although M’sieur knows well already, it being M’sieur Bob, M’sieur’s young brother, who hindered us from throwing away this great fortune. Yet that is the story, and I go too fast. If M’sieur would but write it all in good English of his own manner it seems to me that it would sound much better. For I am but little instructed, having had to work quite hard since I was young, and having had, so, no time for education. And my talk is that of a humble person, and I know no grand words, only the common speech of the Canadians. But M’sieur wishes that I should repeat to him the story in my own way—yes— Oh, I un-

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derstand quite well, M'sieur! It is also the wish of Julie that it should be written down.

"Shall I close the camp door now, M'sieur? The September wind commences to be cool already—one sees that by the yellow birch tops which thicken on the mountain across the lake—there has been frost these three nights. And the trout are coming to the '*frayage*'—the spawning bed at the outlet. I saw great ones with scarlet fins jumping last night when I paddled down to look at my bear trap. What, M'sieur? Ah yes there is most certainly a bear who works about that country, but if we catch him—*tiens!*—I do not know. It is difficult to tell—those old fellows are very wise and not easily caught. They smell a trap a mile, some of the old wise ones. Yet there were fresh tracks, of two days, within an acre of the place. I have good hope for bear meat in camp, M'sieur. Also to-morrow we kill a caribou—M'sieur and I—and M'sieur Bob may also kill if he wishes—*tiens!* We can eat much meat, we others, guides. And beyond that we can send a ham to the camp of M'sieur the Judge, on the Rivière Orage. They miss everything in that

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camp, one knows well. They will be glad to get our meat. Yet, as you say, M'sieur, it is quite true that we have not killed yet.

"Ah yes—the story! I will put this one thick stump in the stove, and then I will begin, if M'sieur is quite ready. Ah! Correct! That catches well—it is a marvel of a stove, that. It would burn better, however, if the door were closed. Yes, M'sieur, I begin.

"As for the affair of the fat M'sieur whose life I saved, it was a simple thing. It was merely that I am strong, M'sieur, strong and large. It is for that they call me in our village '*Le grand Bateese*,' for there are a number of others of that name—Baptiste—yet it is I who am the biggest and strongest—yes, even of all the men of our village. The '*Big Bateese*'—it is I. So that the thing which would have been impossible for many men was not difficult for me. It happened in this way. It was in the month of June when the fat M'sieur, whose name I am not capable of speaking—although one says well that it is a name known in the United States for great riches—came to our club with an-

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other M'sieur from New York. I was engaged by the *secrétaire* of the club, as one of the guides, and it was me whom the fat M'sieur chose always to go with him. I think he placed a confidence in my greatness of size and my strength. And M'sieur will see that it was fortunate he did so.

"It was a cloudy day—*le temps couvert*—that day there. We had gone a little distance up the Frying-pan River—*Rivière à la Poêle*—and the fish were jumping—ah yes! It was terrifying—*effrayant*—M'sieur. And so it happened that the fat M'sieur became excited by the goodness of the fishing, for he sent a line well, and loved it much, and he took many trout that morning. And so it happened that he wished to walk into the rapids, from rock to rock, casting to the holes which he could not reach from shore. And I gave my advice to the M'sieur that he should be careful, for that he was very awkward, but he, being excited, grunted merely. He went, but I stayed on the bank, and as he hooked a fish he conducted it toward me squatting on the bank with my pipe in my mouth, and I unhooked and landed all the fish for him and

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strung them on a strong crotch which I had cut. I remember well that I counted the fish, and there were twenty-three, of a great size. Three of those fish were of three pounds each, and one without doubt was of five. It was all that there is of astonishing. Therefore the M'sieur was content, and became careless, and *v'là!* Suddenly he had lost balance on a rock covered with wet moss, and slippery, and he fell and slid swiftly—like that—into the deep pool beyond, and the stream swept him into the rapids which were there large and of power. But most fortunately the channel took a twist toward the bank where I was, and though it was deep and rough yet it was close to the shore.

“It was the opportunity. I saw that, and I knew that the fat M'sieur could not swim, and that he would drown to a charm if he went over that place into the next pool. So I sprang quickly to that place and threw myself down, and thrust out my arm, braced strongly, to catch the M'sieur as he came. What, M'sieur? But yes, it was difficult to stop him, for he went quick, like a *bateau à vapeur*. Also the shore at that place was a steep rock of

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four feet of height, descending into that stream. Only at the water's edge there was a small ledge, without which perhaps even I could not have saved the M'sieur. But so it happened that I shouted to him and he heard me, and also he saw my hand stretched toward him, and, being desirous of living, he caught at it and touched it, and I had him—but yet he hung in the water in an uncertain manner, for there is no man alive who could raise two hundred and twenty-five pounds—which was the weight of the fat M'sieur—at arm's length. I could not, I—the Big Bateese.

“But he saw that ledge—there, and he reached it with his foot. Yet he was weak with the alarm and the knocking of the rapids, and could help me but little, and in every case it was not an easy place, so that at the end he was about to slip back from lack of force, when *v'là!* I get my two hands somehow under his arms, and I force myself—but yes!— It needed all there was of strength—and so, drawing myself back upon the knees, with a great strain and a pull and an effort enormous I lift that fat M'sieur of two hundred and twenty-five pounds

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quite up that bank of four feet of highness. *Oui, M'sieur*, he was heavy—*pas mal pesant*. But I was content to have done it. It is a good feeling to save a man's life.

“So it happened that the fat M'sieur became pale as he lay breathing forcibly on the rocks; even in his great chin he was pale, and he puffed when he tried to talk, and he could not talk for some minutes. But yet he had a kind heart. I came to know that later. At that time he arose and laid his hand on my shoulder and looked at me as the priest looks of a Sunday at the mass. It was a solemn look.

“‘Bateese,’ he said, ‘you saved my life—I will not forget.’

“*Comment, M'sieur?* Ah yes, he spoke in French, but a *drôle* of a French—I cannot remember the way he said the words, but it was a strange way. What did he say next, M'sieur? Ah! that! It was English, that next, yet I comprehended, for I have heard many *messieurs* say the same.

“‘Damn!’ the fat M'sieur said. ‘Damn! I’m wet.’



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"And as quickly as might be we descended that river, while the teeth of the fat M'sieur rattled, and we returned hurriedly to the camp.

"So it happened that he said nothing more of the affair, and in fact I thought nothing more of it, until the day came to break camp and to go out to the club. Then, at the club-house, the M'sieur sent for me to his room.

"'Bateese,' he asked, 'have you a sweetheart?'

"'But yes, M'sieur,' I answered him gayly, for I was hoping to see Julie Gagnon the next morning. 'In truth I have the best one in our village.'

"He laughed at that, and said 'I suppose every man of you thinks the same.' Then he held out to me a small piece of pink paper. 'Give that to her with my compliments, and tell her to take you to the theatre when you go to Quebec for your wedding trip.'

"So I thanked the M'sieur and put it in my pocket and thought not very much about it because we were not likely to spend money to go to Quebec for a wedding journey. Only I kept it for Julie Gagnon because the fat M'sieur had sent it

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to her. It was, I supposed, a ticket of some sort to a theatre in Quebec, but not being very well instructed, as I have said to M'sieur, I cannot read even the French without trouble, and this was printed in English.

"The next day after that I remember, for I debarked from the train at six o'clock in the morning at the station of Loup Garou, and I walked ten miles to our village of Ste. Anne in less than two hours, so much was I in a hurry to see Julie Gagnon. And so it happened that by good luck I found her alone in the kitchen of her father's house, and ironing clothes, which a girl looks very nice doing, M'sieur, if she be a pretty girl, like Julie. She dropped the flat-iron on the floor with a great bang when she saw me through the window, and M'sieur would not be interested to know what happened next, though to me it was interesting—but yes! And after some time, it happened that I put a hand in my pocket, and there I felt the pink paper of the fat M'sieur, and I gave it to her.

"'What is it?' she asked me, and she looked at it after a *drôle* of a fashion she has, with her eye-

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brows drawn together and her mouth so puckered that it seems reasonable to kiss it.

"I said, as I believed, that it was a ticket to a theatre in Quebec.

"‘Oh!’ said Julie, and she doubled it up lengthwise and turned over the corners, and pretended to make a collar of it around my neck, and laughed at me because the points came but to my ears. ‘It is too small for the monster,’ said Julie. ‘What art thou so big for then—Big Bateese?’ and she made a cravat of it, *par exemple*, and played many foolish tricks, which were all, however, M’sieur, pleasant, because of her manner of doing them.

"But I said, ‘Put it away, Julie. Who knows but we shall go on a grand wedding trip to Quebec and want to go to the theatre with our pink paper.’

"‘Who knows!’ Julie answered pertly. ‘And who knows but it will rain silver dollars down our chimney some evening!’

"However I persuaded her that it was best to keep it, and she is, moreover, thrifty, and saves everything that may be of use, and so she went into the next room and I saw her myself put it

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into the part which was hers of the great chest of drawers which she shared with her sisters. But as she came back she sighed a little, and she said:

“‘A theatre ticket, Bateese! And it would have been quite easy, without doubt, for that fat, rich M’sieur to give us five dollars, or even ten, which would have gone far toward the house-furnishing.’

“For the M’sieur knows well that Julie and I had to wait long for our marrying, because of the want of money. For my father died when I was of sixteen years, and there were many brothers and sisters younger, and it was necessary that I should be in a manner a father to the others, and gain money to help my mother bring up the family. So that, at this time a year ago, while several of them were grown and able to take care of themselves, yet there were two or three still quite young, and I had not been able, although I worked hard, to save more than a little toward setting up a house of my own. And Julie and I had been *fiancé* during a long time already, and she had twenty years and I twenty-three, which M’sieur knows is quite old to marry. So that it was a trouble to us that

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we should have to wait still longer. Yet Julie loved me enough so that she would wait, although both Jean Labrie and Alexandre Beaupré wished to marry her. One sees, M'sieur, what sort of a girl it is—Julie Gagnon.

“What, M'sieur? But yes, as to the pink paper of the fat M'sieur. My wife—which she is now—put it away then, and both of us forgot all about it, so that we did not speak of it during months. And it came winter, the time of Christmas—*Noël*. And immediately after the *fête de Noël* it was arranged, as M'sieur knows well, that I was to go as one of the guides with M'sieur Bob and his comrades, the six young *messieurs*, and also the cousin of M'sieur and of M'sieur Bob—an elderly person of thirty years, who was in charge of the boys. And it so happened that this M'sieur—whom we called M'sieur Charles, wished extremely to see our village, and the way of living of the *habitants*, which it seems is different from the way people live in the cities of the States. And so I was glad to ask them to come to our house for a night and a day, for I knew that I could send my four young

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brothers—who slept in the big chamber upstairs—to my uncle's house, and give that room to M'sieur Charles and M'sieur Bob. And so it happened that they came, and their coming brought great good luck to Julie and me, as M'sieur knows and as I will tell.

“For Julie Gagnon had heard me talk always of M'sieur Bob and she wished much to see him, and so it happened that in the evening after the arrival I took him to make a visit at the house of Henri Gagnon, her father. And as we went along the street—where the path was well beaten, so that we did not need our snowshoes—I saw at all the windows the children, yes and the grown persons too, with their noses against the panes, to see passing the young M'sieur of whom one had heard. But M'sieur Bob did not notice, not he. He was talking with me of the hunting, and he had no other thought. Julie knew of our coming, and the kitchen was all bright and in order, with a great fire in the stove, and all the little boys had been put to bed, for the youngest are all boys, *chez les Gagnons*, and Julie's father and mother and her

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three next sisters and herself were all that there were present. And after the *père* and *mère Gagnon* had greeted us heartily they went up the ladder to bed, so as to leave more room for our visit. And the three little sisters crowded together behind the stove, and watched with great eyes the grand young M'sieur, so tall and so handsome, and wearing such beautiful new clothes. But M'sieur Bob did not know that they watched him, for as M'sieur knows well he does not think about himself, but only of that which is happening.

"He talked quite freely to Julie and the younger ones, as if he were one of us, and he spoke the French as he can when he chooses, like us other *habitants*. So that the girls were enchanted and bewildered at him, that he should be so grand and yet so simple, and they felt honored, as I did also, that he should be at their house. So the sisters sang some of our old songs to entertain him, which the grandfathers brought from France a hundred years ago—two hundred perhaps—who knows? They sang '*A l'école du Roi*,' which M'sieur knows is a fine song; also '*Venez ce soir vous vous amuser*,'

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which is very gay; and of course they sang ‘*À la claire fontaine*’; and then I sang a very old song of Noël:

“*Je sais ce que je dois faire  
Tout le jour de Noël ;  
C’est aller vois mon père, ma mère,  
Aussi tous mes parents,  
Assurément !  
Je l’aurais dans la mémoire longtemps !  
Je l’aurais dans la mémoire  
Longtemps !*”

“Has M’sieur heard that one? It is my favorite. The air runs like this—

“*Tiens ! Le voilà, mon enfant—  
Ton père sur la neige  
En trottant !*”

“*Comment, M’sieur?* But yes—that is true—I must tell the story first, and after that I will sing it all for M’sieur. But in any case I sang. And also M’sieur Bob, who does not know music, no, not at all, essayed to sing ‘*Quand le canot vole*’ for Julie, and made much laughter for us all, himself also. And then Julie laid down the strips of linen for the purpose, on the kitchen floor, and gave me a



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broom, and I danced for M'sieur the old sword dance of France; only in these days, as one has no swords, one uses broomsticks. And also M'sieur Bob, who will try everything and who is full of fun—M'sieur knows how M'sieur Bob has the spirit for everything—yes? Then M'sieur Bob essayed also to do the sword dance, and fell across the broomstick with a great crash and almost knocked the stove over, so that *père Gagnon* put his head down the ladder in his night-cap and demanded

“*Qu'avez-vous, mes enfants?*”

“Which is severe from *père Gagnon*, who is all that there is of the most gentle. And we laughed so that we coughed—it was a wonderful evening, that evening, M'sieur. Julie insists yet that there is a dent in the kitchen floor where M'sieur Bob fell, for he is tall and large for a boy—almost as tall as I, though of course not so broad nor so deep in the shoulders at present. But in any case we were so tired out from laughing at the sword dance of M'sieur Bob that we were glad enough to sit still for a little, and so it happened that we fell to talking about the woods, and

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M'sieur Bob told Julie many stories of our hunting, and he made me out a great hunter and very strong, which of course he did to please Julie—though yet it is quite true that I am capable, as M'sieur knows, and I am also—as all the world agrees, the strongest guide in the club—or in many clubs. So that Julie became boastful, because of my strength, and asked M'sieur Bob if he had heard of my saving of the fat M'sieur. Of course M'sieur Bob had heard, for one has talked much of that in the club, being a thing which most men could not have done, but yet he wished to speak more of it. And so it happened that she told him of the theatre ticket, the pink paper, which the fat M'sieur had sent to her as a thank offering for the saving of his life.

“‘A theatre ticket!’ M'sieur Bob said. ‘It is the queerest thing I have heard in all my life. It is impossible he can have given you a theatre ticket, Bateese!’

“‘*Mais oui, M'sieur,*’ I answered him with respect, yet I was quite certain. ‘The M'sieur said it was to take us to the theatre. It is a piece of pink

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paper, *par exemple*, about so long'—and I measured with my fingers the length of six inches—'and about so wide'—and I measured again two or three inches.

"'Why, it's a check, Bateese,' said M'sieur Bob, and he grew very interested, and kicked his legs, as M'sieur knows is the way of M'sieur Bob when interested, he being still very young.

"But I laughed at that idea. 'Ah no! M'sieur Bob,' I said firmly. 'I know a check well, for M. Legros, for whom I worked in the lumber camp last year, paid me for my work with checks, three times. So I know a check quite well, and this is not one. A check is blue, *par exemple*, and this is of a bright pink—*couleur de rose*.'

"And at that M'sieur Bob, to my surprise, jumped up and swung one of his legs quite over my head, and danced with wildness about the kitchen, and shouted also, and laughed his great laugh which one hears two miles across water.

"'Ha—ha! Ha—ha!'

"Like that—M'sieur remembers that laugh? And Julie and her three sisters and I all stared at him,

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astonished, for we did not understand. But in a minute

“‘Bring it to me! Show it to me!’ M’sieur Bob ordered like a general, and all the girls sprang to their feet, and my Julie flew into the bedroom and to the big chest of drawers, and in a moment I heard her call.

“‘Hast thou been in my things then, thou *p’tite Marie*?’”

“And the *p’tite Marie*, who is ever doing what she should not, jumped as if a pin had stuck into her. ‘What hast thou, Julie? It is always I who am accused, whatever is lacking. Why should I have taken thy paper?’

“‘But it is gone,’ said Julie. ‘The little pink paper is gone.’

“‘A-ah!’ said Marie thoughtfully—‘that miserable bit of paper—there? I saw that—*tiens*! It may be that I took that paper!’

“‘I knew it,’ said Julie, and M’sieur Bob laughed again his great laugh of ‘Ha—ha!’

“‘*P’tite Marie* is guilty,’ he said. ‘Where is the paper, Marie? Quick! Find it!’

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“But Marie stood with her finger on her lips, considering. ‘Did I throw it out again? Did I burn it? It was a long time—two days ago. But no! I think that I took it to roll up the hair pins which my uncle Gaspard brought me from Loup Garou, to keep the dust from them. But yes!’ And she flew after Julie into the bedroom.

“In a moment the two came back together, and in Julie’s hand was the paper which I knew at once to be that of the fat M’sieur, only it looked now quite wrinkled and old, having been rolled around hair pins, and having holes of pins in it which had been put in to keep it together. So that it was a wretched enough looking pink paper, when Julie gave it to M’sieur Bob. But the young M’sieur took it with the air of a great lord which he has at times, and he stood with his legs far apart and frowned as he regarded it. Then, quite suddenly, the frown was gone and he was waving the little paper like a crazy man, and the legs of that young M’sieur kicked also as I have seen no other legs kick, no, not in my life. It is always the legs of M’sieur Bob by which he expresses his joy at the first.

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“Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!” he shouted, which M’sieur knows is the American for ‘*Très bien!*’

“And by that I knew that the little paper held good luck for us, and I was glad, even before M’sieur Bob explained. And when he explained it took me a long time to believe it and I was also obliged to go and search the schoolmaster, who knows English, to hear him say that it was indeed true. It seemed a thing much too wonderful to be possible—as Julie my wife says, it was in fact like a *conte de fée*. Yet it was true, M’sieur, that the little pink paper which I had believed a ticket for the theatre and which Julie and I had considered of no importance, was indeed a check, and, in fact, a check for a thousand dollars. So that suddenly all things were made quite easy for me and I could give money to my mother for the family, and Julie and I were married very soon.

“I think that is all, M’sieur. I have told the story as I am capable, which is not much. It would be far better, to my thought, if M’sieur would put it into grand, large words—English words, that would sound like the words of a book and that

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only a few people could understand. For my words, they are too simple to be much—all the world can understand what I say, being only a poor *habitant*, and not instructed. Yet of course it is as M'sieur says—but it is curious.

“What, M'sieur? But no, certainly. It has not tired me. It is not work to talk. When we go off on a hunt to-morrow, that will be work, *par exemple*, for we shall walk many miles to that little lake of which I have told M'sieur. And no white man has ever been there—not even I, for it was the savage, Joe Véro, who told me of it, and when we get there, M'sieur will have a shot—ah yes, surely. There is no doubt. And by to-morrow at this time we will be returning to the camp with a large caribou. Ah yes!

“I must not detain M'sieur longer. I have done as Julie wished, and the story is told, and M'sieur has been of a kindness. Shall I put more wood on the fire, M'sieur? No? *Merci, mille fois, M'sieur. Merci. Bonsoir, M'sieur.*”

**IN THE OPEN**





## IN THE OPEN

### I

#### THE WAY OF HAPPINESS

**S**ET in green hills, yellow-flecked where the birch tops were turning, half of the lake swam in afternoon sunshine. The other half, in the shadow of the shore, lay cool and brown, and in the blacker depths trout were beginning to jump. The great god Pan leaned on his paddle by the dock and watched smilingly, as I turned the leaves of my fly-book, from blue, sparkling eyes. Damp hair lay in classic rings on his forehead; his muscles were full of wild grace; he was very beautiful, and in his vague, greasy clothes, very heathen. He was a French-Canadian guide, my great god Pan, and his name was Godin. I called him Pan because he took me fishing "down in the reeds by the river," and because he looked the part. He had never heard of the god, and would highly have disapproved of so

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shiftless a person. When the flies were on the leader, and flashing steadily through air to water, a thread of light with three hints of color, when the canoe crossed with its quick, even heart-beats to the mouth of the Rivière Sauvage, I began to talk, and to make Godin talk. We both spoke French—Godin the soft Canadian *patois*, I what will pass for Parisian of the purest, so long as I reproduce it in English.

*I.*—Godin, did you ever hear of Izaak Walton?

*Godin.*—Madame?

*I.*—Of Izaak Walton. He was a fisherman.

*Godin.*—There was a monsieur from New York, Madame, of a name that resembles. Val-tong? Was the monsieur of our club?

*I.*—I believe not, Godin. But he was a famous fisherman, and wrote a book about fishing. Everyone likes to read it, because he was so gentle and so happy.

*Godin.*—Ah, that! It is a great thing, Madame, to be happy. It is what is of the most important.

*I.*—Yes. Everyone cannot manage it, however.

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*Godin.*—But pardon, Madame. It is generally the case that one can. Certainly I do not mean the very miserable, the suffering. Certainly not. But if one has health, if one has enough work and gains reasonably of money, if the family are well and the beasts—with a little of fishing, a little of hunting, a little of gayety in the evening—one should then be happy.

*I.*—You are happy, are you, Godin?

*Godin.*—But yes, Madame. Very certainly. Why not? I have my house, which I built with my own hands, and it is a pleasure to beautify it. I have the pig and my wife and the infants. Fifty acres of land I have, and a horse and two cows, and a very large, fine pig, as I said, which I shall kill for the winter's meat. I am desirable as a guide; I have of work in the season. With the money that M'sieur will pay me for guiding, I shall have gained two hundred dollars this year. It is not bad, with the little farm. And I have my ambition. I have the hope to be made next year *gardien* of the club—that is three hundred dollars *tout seul*, and by the trapping I can gain much more.

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*I.*—All that, Godin, is good; it is comfort, but it is not quite happiness. Do you never wish for something that is not duty, but only pleasure?

*Godin.*—Cast just to the right, ahead, Madame. *Un gros* jumped where one sees the little foam.

The dialogue is interrupted while I cast, hook, play and land a two-pound trout. Godin holds it up, his thumb through the gills.

*Godin.*—*Tiens!* Not bad of a trout? Madame is skilful. But there was a question, a little argument. See then, Madame, what it is that I think. The happiness comes not always when one searches, when one attempts for pleasure. It is to be gay out of what one has, to make a little *fête* of walking to the far woods for the chopping, perhaps. It is well a small thing, Madame, yet my wife and I have been more content with the *drôle* of a cow that danced a big dance in the shed, than another evening, when we wore our clothes of Sunday, and went out to supper with the cousins of the schoolmistress. Even of a year when the pig died and we had no meat, we made fun, we others, by the pretending that the brown of the *patates* was meat.

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We pretended so all winter and were content. I think, indeed, it is wise in our life to be like the little river *là-bas*. One cannot deny that it does its best in every part. It is gay where the sands are smooth under the water and the sun shines through it. Oh yes! and it is of a good coolness in the shadows near the logs of the shore. But one sees easily that it laughs most in the rapids, where the rocks are thick. Is it not true, Madame?

The Indian River—the “*Rivière Sauvage*”—creeping out from its long journey through the hush of forest silences, lay above us in a patch of sunshine between the heavenward points of thick-set spruces, and from the rift twenty feet away a sudden fall of water rippled out to the god Pan’s bright little heathen sermon a musical “Amen.”

. . . . .

There was the smoke of a camp-fire and the white gleam of tents from the far hollow of a bay on our lake that evening, and we were displeased. It was our theory in these deep woods that no one lived in the world but ourselves. But in the morning, behold! it was Craig Martin and his

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party, which altered everything. No one grudges Craig Martin a place in the world, not even in the woods. That afternoon I played guide to his "*Monsieur*," and paddled him in my birch-bark canoe, for fishing. Because he could have had a navy of canoes if it so pleased him, it seemed to me very attractive of him to admire and examine mine.

*Craig*.—What's that queer name you call it?

*I*.—"Ouitouche." That's Montagnais Indian for chub.

*Craig*.—Oh! "Ouitouche," is it? But why chub? Why not a high-bred fish? Why not Ouananiche—or Troutche?

*I*.—Look at the way it goes—do you see that sidewise wobble? That's exactly the way a chub swims. And no high-bred fish was ever short and squat like this canoe. It has no lines and no speed, and it's so tippy that no one will go in it but Godin and me—and you. But it's a beautiful piece of bark, and I like it, and no one expects anything of it.

*Craig*.—That's a great point. The moment you

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get advantages you get responsibilities. That's why I come into the woods—to escape my responsibilities.

*I.*—It's the one place for that, isn't it? I suppose everyone feels it, but to you billionaire people it must be like splashing into water from fire. Aren't you glad to miss your mail every morning?

*Craig.*—Oh! (Stretching his arms across the gunwales.)

*I.*—Oh, don't! Oh, do be careful—you'll have us over. And you never could swim in those boots.

*Craig.*—Beg pardon.

Then a long silence while Craig, taking up his four-ounce rod in his three-pound hands, let loose the dancing flies on their stiff, curly snells, and with a skilful side-cast dipped them delicately in water. Then was heard the click of the reel and the pleasant antiphonal whirl that fishermen love, as he let out more and more line, and cast each time between.

*I.*—It's a bit early for them to rise. I don't see any jumping. But you might cast in the pool there



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beyond the old log. A big fellow rose there the other day. Cast carefully—a long line. I won't put you any nearer at first.

Ten minutes of steady, conscientious fishing with no result.

*I.*—Too early, I'm sure. I'll paddle down the lake and back again for half a mile. Don't tire your wrist casting any more for a while.

*Craig* (with a smile).—My wrist! I'm not a very delicate flower, my lady, if I am—if I have—if I am what you called me.

*I.*—What I called you? Oh, a billionaire!

*Craig.*—I made up my mind young that I'd be as strong as other boys, if I did happen to be rich. I had no family, only a lot of money, so I had to help myself, you see. It's rather a drawback to a man—much money. If you aren't careful it changes the whole perspective of life, deadens ambition, kills simplicity, takes away almost every sort of happiness.

*I.*—Takes away happiness? I don't see how you mean.

*Craig.*—Why, all sorts of things that are other

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boys' dreams, were thrown at me from the start. I had nothing to wish for, and it was all such an old story that I was pretty near having nothing to enjoy. But—then I woke up.

*I.*—In time.

*Craig* (with a cheerful grin).—Yes, in time. Because now I get fun out of everything.

*I.*—I know one thing you got fun out of. Baptiste Gros-Louis, who would have died of consumption last winter. His brother Tomas was one of our guides. I know a lot more, too.

*Craig.*—Oh, that! I'd have been a brute not to have seen that. And it meant nothing to me to send him down there. There's no credit in that. But it was fun, as you say. That isn't the trick, however, for everybody enjoys giving away money they don't want.

*I.*—Oh, do they?

*Craig.*—As I say, the trick is, not that, but to learn to like things without any money standard, to have a slice of bacon up here taste exactly as good as terrapin at Sherry's; to get the good time out of being wet and tired and bitten by black flies

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—that last comes hard at the moment, but it is a good story afterward.

*I.*—You have a yacht and a lot of horses, and all that sort of thing. Do you really like them no better than—this?

*Craig.*—Oh, I like them a lot. I have a good time out of them, and it's a man's business, I believe, situated like me, to spread his good time around as far as he can reach. But I believe I like this a bit better. You see, as you pointed out, you get mail on the yacht, and here—it's as if I were a primeval savage! It's great! I have rain and cold and flies and a-plenty of discomfort to stand up against. Sometimes up here I can get to believe that I really have to fight my own way and win whatever I own, instead of having it served to me on toast, with mushrooms. It must be good to work for a thing and get it!

*I.*—You did that with your muscle.

*Craig.*—By Jove! I did—that's so! How nice of you to think of it. And what a satisfaction it was when I got discouraged and then worked twice as hard and got stale and thought I'd never

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be any good on a team, and then came out all right.

I looked at his arm where his flannel sleeve was pushed back, and then at the big shoulders, and thought of the splendid dash of the game I had seen him win for Yale a few years before. And meanwhile, with even ripples of water under the bow, the "Quitouche" had slipped back to the mouth of the Indian River. Craig Martin's eyes wandered up the opening where the patch of sunlight lay, dazzling as the afternoon before, across the pool above the golden sand.

*Craig.*—It's like that a bit (nodding). The way things go for me mostly is like that quiet part where it's all sunshine and no effort, and of course, it's right to be happy over that part, too. But the life and the fun come in rather more, I think, when the stream strikes the rocks.

As his gaze and his thoughts wandered far away from me, I considered how the path of happiness lies through neither much nor little; how the manliness to meet poverty gaily is, perhaps, no more than the manliness to meet riches simply; and how

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only unselfishness may find that pathway anywhere. And again, as yesterday, the falling water sang a rippling "Amen" to the unconscious sermon of a simple and courageous soul.

## II

### THE GIFT OF TONGUES

It is difficult to remember, hearing English spoken with the fluency that is common, that from some points of view it is a foreign language. From a Russian, from a Chinese, and, perhaps as painfully, from a French point of view. This latter comes out incisively when one goes into the Canadian woods and has *habitants* for guides. The average traveller first notices that he does not speak French as he thought he did; he then notices that the guides do not speak English as he thinks they should.

The boy came to visit us last summer at "*Chateau Ciel*," which translates "Sky Castle," and immediately upon his arrival there happened a symposium of languages. The boy is removed from

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his thirtieth birthday by a matter of twenty-four months, yet has kept, with all manliness, a lovable gift of boyishness, which is some men's charm from three to ninety. It makes it simplest to describe him as the boy. It was understood that he spoke no French, the fragments thrown at him in the university not having adhered, so it seemed to keep the balance that the youngster detailed as his guide spoke no English.

The first morning we sent the two off duck hunting. Josef on the dock, blue-eyed, silent, shy, six feet of powerful muscle and willing good nature, slid the canoe into the water, while the boy sneaked back to me, watching from the gallery.

*The Boy* (confidentially).—What's the French for ducks?

*I.—Canards.*

*The Boy* (thoughtfully).—Oh! Do you say the "d" at the end?

*I.—Oh, I don't know. Just say it. Like this: canards.*

*The Boy.*—Oh! All right. Good-bye. (And then

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"*Bonne chance*," and from the canoe "Thanks," and "*Merci, Madame*." )

Three hours later the hunters came back with one black duck.

*I*.—One duck! Why, there were dozens of them on Lac Grenouille.

*The Boy*.—This was a fool duck.

*I*.—You don't need to explain that duck. Explain the ones you didn't get.

*The Boy* (sings softly in a lovely tenor).—"In the dear old summer time!"

*I*.—Please tell me what happened. Were they all gone?

*The Boy*.—You gave me No. 8 shot. It's too small. I hit 'em all over and tickled 'em.

Profuse apologies followed on my part, and from the boy, the soul of chivalry, efforts to demonstrate how it was clearly his fault.

*I*.—Well, all I can say is that I am awfully sorry. Was there much conversation between you and Josef?

*The Boy*.—Oh, I talked and he talked.

*I*.—What did he say?

*The Boy* (giving me a sharp look).—He said,

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"M'sieur, gooble-gooble, ong-sa plong-ki alley-ong."

I.—That was interesting.

*The Boy.*—But I talked French. And Josef understood it.

I.—What did you say?

*The Boy.*—It was after I missed all the ducks. I said, "*Vive les canards!*"

From that moment the spell of learning, the fascination of the study of languages, was upon him. People who go abroad for six months and come back with an English accent are not a patch on the boy. He framed elaborate sentences to bring in two French words, and that his language was hash was nothing to him. When we sat around the table in the woods, the lake gleaming twenty feet away, surely good digestion must have waited on appetite, for the laughter that brings it rang to the skies after each Franco-American remark of the boy's. Sometimes he did a whole sentence of strange and agonized French. When an attentive guide poured half a pint of maple syrup on his flapjacks, "*C'est trop beaucoup assez,*" he said proudly, and what he meant no one knows. He gathered in new



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words and used them before they had time to get cold, whether he needed them or not.

*The Boy*.—What's that Josef said? What's "monter"?

*I*.—"Monter" is to ascend, to go up.

*The Boy* (shouting to the canoe flying with rapid paddle-beats across the bay).—Josef!

*Josef* (arresting the boat).—*Oui, M'sieur!*

*The Boy*.—Come *ici* for me in a *demi-heure*, and we'll go to the *Rivière Sauvage* and *monter* the *rapides*.

*Josef*.—*Très bien, M'sieur* (and went on to ask the head guide what *M'sieur* had said).

All French not useful otherwise the boy adopted as oburgation. When Josef told him that a kingfisher was a "*pecheur bleu*" he was amused for a day.

"It's the best cuss word I know," he said, and brought it out savagely "*Pecher bleu!*" It was hard to realize that our friend, the dart of blue light which so often guided the canoe up winding Canadian rivers, punctuating the stillness with sudden splashes, could sound so wicked.

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Josef came stealing to me, scarlet, stammering, for information.

*Josef.*—Madame—pardon. Madame is perhaps occupied.

*I.*—Not at all. What is it, Josef?

*Josef.*—Is it that “*tirer*” is to tchut?

*I.*—Yes, that’s right. Shoot. Anything more?

*Josef.*—But pardon. I fatigue Madame. Is it that “*original*” is muss?

And if I had not known the French I might never have guessed that he meant “moose.”

The boy was fishing and only kindergarten trout rose to his fly. He swung to Josef one after another of a quarter, an eighth of a pound, and we watched his cheerful progress in grieved silence. Josef’s swarthy face grew longer and his enormous blue eyes sadder as he took them off the hook. Finally as he snapped off a tiny flopper, he shook his head and broke into new-found English. “Smoll feesh!” he said, and we laughed till we felt better.

The two students of language started out on a hunt “in the grayish light of the dawn,” on one of

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the raw days that come in Canada in September. Over "clean, damp, windy marshes," up shallow streams, through dripping woods they passed noiselessly, watchfully, until at noon they sat down by a few smoking sticks at a tinkling brook's side, for their lunch. The boy told me how Josef's brow was seamed with thought, and how he saw that the Frenchman was trying to find words and to make conversation. At last, with a look up and about at wet woods and gray sky, with a shrug of his shoulders, in his pretty, gentle way and soft voice he brought out his best effort.

"Damn cold," said Josef.

There came a great day when hunting was rewarded, and the boy shot his first caribou, and he and Josef came home tired, gory, glorious, bringing their spoils with them. The boy was in a state of elation where limitations of language were nothing. Instead of buck and doe game, the Canadians say "*gros*" and "*vâche*," a big one and a cow. He had learned that and rehearsed it, but in his dizzy success he lost his grip.

"I killed a buck," he said, modest, restrained, but

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excited. "I killed a big *gros* and two *veuves* went off."

Of course it was true that he had made "widows" of them, but his simple way of stating it was a surprise.

Two weeks ago the boy and I were waiting for a northbound Broadway car. New York seethed about us; people jostled us; our car was long in coming, and when it came, regardless of signals it rushed past and on, and we were left to wait again. I looked up at the boy in wordless exasperation, and I saw his face change swiftly from annoyance to quiet amusement.

"*Pêcheur bleu!*" he said fiercely.

And suddenly the rush and roar of the great city were gone; in his dancing eyes, the color of trout pools, I saw a vision of cold Canadian rivers, of steep, still hills and silver lakes and sunlit, waving marshes; peace and forest silence and the fragrance of mountain air held me for a long breath in mid-Broadway.

"*Pêcheur bleu!*"

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### III

#### THE STORIES OF VÉZINA

Like the patter of summer rain in the night-time on the bark-covered logs of a camp-roof is the conversation of Vézina. It is never loud or insistent, but soothing and steady, and the gentle, unceasing tinkle of it goes on till the listener finds his eyes drooping with pleasant drowsiness. Yet it is interesting, for the French-Canadian has the French instinct for dramatic effect, which is yet wholly an instinct, for the life of a *habitant* is of too sharp a simplicity to admit often of pose. So Vézina's little stories of his adventures and his friends' adventures, are as unconscious as a child's tales of play, yet crisp with the relish for the theatrical which is of his race. Vézina is not my guide, but we are great friends, and sometimes of an August afternoon when the shadows are stealing over the water, and there are deep black holes along the western shore of the Castor Noir River, I get a

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thirst for one of his *petites histoires* and borrow him from the *monsieur* whose property he is, and go fishing. His knotted, rough hands hold a paddle as delicately as a lady holds a needle, and a canoe seems magnetized by him, so lightly does it obey his touch. He is a strong and skilful paddler, which adds much to the pleasure of fishing from a boat.

*I.*—I want to fish this pool at the head of the rapids first, Vézina.

*Vézina.*—But yes, Madame. One is sure of a number of trout here. Little ones, perhaps, but *v'là*, that makes nothing. (With a cheerful shrug of his shoulders.) It is those that are much the best to eat. In fact, it is much wiser for Madame to cast here first.

Vézina would find some advantage in the plan if I told him I had decided to fish from the tops of the trees. I consult him about the flies, and we decide on a brown hackle as conservative and safe, a Parmachene Belle, always good in Canadian waters, and a Scarlet Ibis, because I like its looks. Vézina laughs gently at that, but instantly sug-

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gests that Madame fishes to amuse herself, and if it amuses her to have the red fly, why not? What matter if one misses a few fish, the little misérables! At last——

*Vézina.*—Ah! *V'là!* Everything is arranged. Will Madame embark in the boat?

He squats on the big rock and holds it with as anxious a care as if Madame were a paralytic. I embark, and settle myself in the bottom of the canoe near the bow, my *bottes sauvages* taking up the immediate foreground, and my back against Vézina's old coat, carefully folded over the bar behind me.

*Vézina.*—Madame finds herself comfortable?

*I.*—Very, thank you. And now, Vézina, I'm going to catch fifty trout, and while I do it, I want you to tell me a little story—*racontez moi une petite histoire.*

*Vézina.*—Ah, but with pleasure. It is only unlucky that I know nothing worthy to tell Madame. We are poor people, we others, and we go nowhere but to our villages and the forest—how can one know stories of interest so? But if Madame cares

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to listen—one has one's little adventures. Strange things happen sometimes. I do not believe all of them, of course—I. But the people who are superstitious believe them. Have I ever recounted to Madame the story of the great black man who was about our village? No? It was this way: Achille Dupré was a *garçon* of the village, a wild boy, but with no harm in him—yet he drank too much. (Vézina shook his head solemnly, and his voice was full of sadness.) So it happened that there was a dance one night at the house of Achille's uncle, René Dupré, and there was a game played in which the boys drew straws for the choice of the girls for the going home. It was well known that Achille loved Marie Jeunesse, the prettiest girl in St. Raymond, but it was not known if she loved him or the big André St. Jean. So it happened that when he came to draw—he had drunk much whiskey, and was well *en fête*, as I have told Madame—he cried out that if he might draw the short straw, and have first choice of the girls, he would let the devil have his soul. And so it happened that he drew it. It was but two days after that, Madame, that



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André St. Jean was walking in the wood nearest the village when he saw suddenly, coming toward him, a man, perfectly black and quite eight feet tall. André stopped short and waited, and the man came toward him, and bent to look at him, and passed him by with no sound. So it happened that several others of St. Raymond met this great black man, always walking, always regarding closely, as if searching for someone, and making no sound. At the end he came boldly one day to the house of Achille's father, when only the mother and the youngest infant, a child of three years, were at home. Madame Dupré caught the baby and ran with him in great fear to the neighbors, and after that no one saw the great black man again, but early in the spring Achille was drowned. He was walking logs that one was rafting in the river that goes down to the Lac St. Pierre. It was a pity. He was a capable young man, Achille.

*I.*—Vézina, how many trout have you taken off the hook?

His paddle stuck in the crevice of two mossy rocks a foot below the water, my guide leans over

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to count the slippery bits of pink and silver in the bottom of the boat.

*Vézina.*—It makes seven. But *v'là!* Madame, where a good one jumped—to the left, beyond the branch.

*I* (a moment later, as I swung the flopping half-pounder through bubbling, lashing water to the stern of the canoe).—There he is. But, *Vézina*, about your story. Do you mean that the big black man was the devil whom Achille had called on to help him, and that he was after Achille's soul?

*Vézina.*—I? But pardon, Madame—I mean nothing. It is the way I heard the tale. I did not see him—I.

*I.*—Did anyone tell you about it who did see him?

*Vézina.*—But surely—André St. Jean himself told me. He saw him most certainly. But I—I do not believe easily. Yet many saw him. But it is not such tales as that—such foolishness—that interest Madame. It is the tales of hunting and fishing—the true tales, is it not?

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I.—I like all sorts. But tell me one of the others now—a hunting story. Did you ever kill a moose?

Vézina laughed softly in his pretty, deferential way.

Vézina.—But yes, Madame—a number! It was the first that was the most wonderful. I was well an infant at that hour there, I had but nine years. It was the first winter I went into the woods with my father, and I felt like a man. But *v'là!* my father fell ill—oh, but very ill! And I had the care of him and the fear of his dying there, and the chopping of wood and the cooking—all, I was forced to do *tout seul*. And after some days the provision ran low. We had well very little to eat, and my father was very ill. So I took his *carabine* and went into the woods on my snow-shoes for partridges, for even then I could cut off the head of a partridge with a *carabine*-bullet. And not a hundred yards from camp, as I walked softly on the *racquettes*, *v'là!* a bull-moose. The wind was from him, and he had not scented the fire or me. He looked as large as a house, I think, for I was quite young, as I said before, Madame, but I fired at him, with the

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old *carabine* that one charged from the muzzle, and he fell. I had shot him through the head, which was well, for he had no knowledge of me. And so I loaded again, and put a second shot through his heart, for I was little, and wished him to be entirely dead. He was so large. And my father was much cheered by that killing, and while I tried to skin the moose, the good God sent Jacques Duplain, a neighbor of St. Raymond, hunting by our tent, and then all was well, and my father recovered his health so that we brought him home, and I had a distinction among the boys of St. Raymond, because I had killed a moose first of them all.

I.—That's a very pretty story, Vézina. I like that. What a plucky little chap you must have been to take all that on your shoulders and carry it through! Tell me another hunting story. Have you ever seen a moose angry and dangerous?

Vézina (laughing to himself a mirthful, bewitching, childlike laugh).—There is a *drôle* of a tale about that, Madame. But hope a moment (*esperez un moment* is French-Canadian for "wait") the trout are becoming few. I will put the boat quite at

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the head of the chute, and Madame will cast in the swift water. There should be good ones there.

The black water of the Castor Noir ran in a band of forty feet wide for perhaps twenty yards in front of us, and then with a roar and a tumble shot down between the green walls of a gorge in white cascades, over boulders and through chasms for fifty yards more of steep rapids. Vézina's skilful paddle held the egg-shell canoe back strongly as we went steadily down the fast, smooth current, and caught it deftly behind a rock at the very crest of the fall. There we swung, balancing, a moment, and then the bow nestled against green velvet moss and the pinks and blues and grays of the rock, and I faced down-stream, with a clear, wide space back of me for the recover. Vézina had placed me perfectly, as he always did.

I.—Now, then, Vézina, for the moose story that made you laugh.

Vézina (with light-hearted soft laughter again).  
—Yes, indeed, it was a *drôle* of a tale, that  
—as I said to Madame—to see two *messieurs* with *carabines* and four guides all hunted by a

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bull-moose, and no one of them daring to fire a shot. I was of the guides, but yet I must laugh to think of it. It was this way: We had left the canoes at the beginning of a portage, and were to walk to a lake—it was not in this club, Madame—and there hunt, and Godin and I, we were to explore a turn, to find another lake of which the savages had told us. So it happened that the portage was a long one, and we made lunch on the way. So it happened that while we others, the guides, made our lunch after the *messieurs*, the *messieurs* walked on slowly ahead. And at some distance beyond the place of lunch the portage divided into two branches and the *messieurs* did not know which to follow, the left or the right. So as they stood at the fork, waiting for us, behold a bull-moose, who walked at his ease down the right branch of the portage, followed by a cow and two *petits*. And the *messieurs* had left their *carabines* with us others. So it happened that they stood and regarded and the animals also stood and regarded. And so we others, the guides, came up, and seeing the beasts, slipped the *carabines* to the *messieurs*

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softly. But the great one, at our coming, had lifted the mane along his back so that it stood upright—*crais!* but it was terrible! And his eyes became bloodshot and savage, and he was of enormous size. And so it happened that the two *messieurs* and the four guides turned very quietly and did their possible to reach the boats. And as we entered the boats with some quickness, *v'là!* the grand duke, *M. l'Orignal*, who came rushing with a huge noise through the woods, and charged out upon us. But happily we had all embarked in the canoes, and we others forced ourselves at the paddles, believe it, Madame, and so we escaped. *Crais!* but it was the king of all moose, and a very dreadful sight to see!

*I.*—Vézina, you ought to be ashamed to tell that story. I think it is disgraceful. Why didn't one of the guides fire if the *messieurs* were afraid?

*Vézina* (laughing deliciously again).—Truly, Madame, it sounds so to me now, myself. But it was exactly as I tell you—so horrible was the beast that we became like children. Madame, by good luck, did not see that *original*.



Came rushing with a huge noise through the woods.





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I.—Perhaps I really haven't more courage than six men, yet it does seem to me I should not have run away with a repeating rifle in my hands.

Vézina.—Ah! One sees it is impossible to make Madame comprehend how he was terrible! There is another *petite histoire* of a friend of mine—but Madame is doubtless fatigued to hear so stupid stories?

I.—No. Tell it to me.

Vézina.—If Madame will pardon, I will light my pipe.

There were shuffling sounds back of me as he dived into his pockets for matches and tobacco, the canoe swung loose a second as the paddle was held in his arm, then a short, quick puff or two, the pleasant, pungent odor of Canadian plug floated forward about me, and Vézina's voice began again, its easy, liquid tones chording with the bubbling water. Every few sentences were punctuated with a puff, and the dim scent of tobacco set the little hunting story as in a soft-colored frame. The canoe hung on the edge of the steep drop of the river; on either side tall hills, whose coming to-

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gether made the gorge, rose green and impassive; below us the water rushed, a mass of brightness—white on top like champagne, yellow like sherry under the foam, and beneath, in the depths, the tawny gold of old whiskey. And as I cast, and brought in every two minutes or so a flashing, spotted line of intense life, Vézina talked, and hardly interrupted himself with a gratified “Ah!” or a little laugh as he took one after another from the hook, and laid them, quiet, in the bottom of the boat.

*Vézina.*—But yes, this is another sort of tale, and one hopes Madame will be better pleased. There is of courage in it—oh yes, a little. It was Henri Gros-Louis told it to me—the nephew of my uncle’s wife. He and his brother Josef were in the woods hunting, it was in the month of January and the snow was deep. They came out on a lake and saw, resting in a hollow where the snow had drifted, a large moose. Each of them had a *carabine*, but of the old sort, which one loads from the muzzle, and one has, as Madame knows well, but a single shot. So it happened that Josef fired his shot, and

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wounded the animal, but slightly, across the shoulder. And the moose ran into the woods. And Josef, stopping to load again as rapidly as might be, followed him. But Henri had loosened the thong of his snow-shoe, and it was necessary to arrange it, so he did not accompany Josef. So it happened that Henri heard another shot, all near, and looking up, saw his brother Josef come running, and crashing behind him the great beast. And Josef, as he ran, looked over his shoulder and seeing the moose close upon him, threw himself to one side in the snow—for one knows that the *original* charges always in a straight line—and thus saved himself for that time, though so close was the animal that his hoof broke Josef's snow-shoe. And Henri, who is my friend, saw the moose turn and make ready to charge again at Josef, lying in the snow, and unable yet to rise, for his *racquette* was broken. And Henri had but one bullet, because his *carabine* was of the old sort, as I have said to Madame. But yet it was necessary to act, so he fired, and happily the moose fell, and very soon died. It was a large one of twelve hundred pounds.

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Madame has already forty fish which I have counted, and it begins to grow dark. It will soon be difficult to see the portage back to our camp. Does Madame think that perhaps one had better stop fishing for the time? Another day, and if Madame will allow me to paddle her, we will take all of the fifty—oh yes, and more. It will be easy. I and Madame, we are always lucky!

Two nights after we were camped on lovely Lake Aberdien. A jewelled sunset had died behind hills and water and islands of fairy beauty, but far different had been our welcome to the enchanted lake. We had landed in a thunder-storm, and in spite of everybody's strenuous efforts, most things had gotten wet, and camp had to be made in dripping woods, with damp tents to put up and the corners of all belongings moist and muddy. Yet a woodsman learns that such times must be the jolliest, for without large extra allowance of cheerfulness, the situation would be unbearable. As the calculation is not made exactly, there is always an overflow of good humor that brings gayety out of discomfort and makes the bad episode a good

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story to be remembered pleasantly long after. We sat in the doorway of the tent after supper before a roaring fire of six-foot logs, with a drowsy, healthy ache in every hard-worked muscle, and enjoyed the uncomplicated happiness of a well-fed, well-warmed animal. There was not a care or a responsibility in the world, or if there was it did not trouble us. Vézina came across, with his light hunter's step, from the guides' camp a hundred yards away, to look after the fire. A tongue of flame leaped up as he came and lighted the woods for yards around the tent, and we saw him standing there, a humble figure in nondescript damp clothes, with a faded felt hat pulled over his shock hair, but smiling and sunshiny as always, and with the pretty politeness of a Frenchman ready as ever on his lips.

*Vézina.*—Madame must not be chilled. Is it that perhaps there is need of wood?

*Monsieur.*—Perhaps one more log would be a good thing.

*Vézina.*—Ah, but willingly, M'sieur!

Pulling his axe from his belt, he goes into the

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half-darkness to the hastily gathered wood-pile, strikes a swift blow or two, and comes back, his arms filled with birch. It seems far too pretty to burn, the clean, cream-colored wood with its long streamers of shining bark, but the Frenchman lays it with no compunctions on the altar of our comfort, and the loose silver of the bark catches and flames with a joyful crackle. Deep under the blaze is a bed of pulsing orange coals. Vézina, squatting by the fire, as the guides sit for hours, pulls his pipe from one moist pocket, a tobacco-pouch of discolored caribou-skin from another, fills the former from the latter, and then, with a keen look at the glowing mass, puts his hand quickly into the heart of the heat, and knocking out a bit of golden fire, drops it deftly from one palm to another, and so into the pipe.

*I.*—Vézina! Didn't that burn you?

*Vézina.*—Ah! No, Madame. One is accustomed.

Then the pleasant dull scent of the Canadian tobacco, which carries so much of woods and water and mountains, surrounds us slowly, and suddenly from the dark lake that lies unseen a few yards

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away comes a weird, loud, long cry. Every one jumps, and we stare in startled silence for a moment past the near birches gleaming tall and slim in the circle of the firelight, past their shadowy sisters swaying ghostlike beyond, into the deep blackness of silent woods and water. Vézina, with his fish mouth open and his huge gray eyes wide, sits alert like a creature of the woods on guard, and then laughs softly, delightedly.

*Vézina.*—*Un gru.*

*I.*—Oh, a heron! I thought it was a lost soul.

*Vézina.*—It was like that they called, the night—but I have recounted to M'sieur that tale.

*Monsieur.*—Never mind—tell Madame.

*Vézina.*—Ah! It was a night of much misery, that! We were building a camp for a m'sieur, Madame understands, eight of us others, guides. It was in a valley of perhaps a mile wide and four miles long, and we were living in tents by the cabin which was as yet but half built. There was a little river, wide of twenty feet or more, which ran by the camp, and through the valley. Otherwise there were steep mountains on both hands. The night of which



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I speak it was dead weather, and the air weighed—a night displeasing. As we sat by our tents, smoking, the *grus* called, as a moment ago. But there were a number of them, and they called repeatedly. I have never heard it so. It was, as Madame has said, like the cry of a soul lost. We were troubled a little, for Pierre, my brother, said, “It means no good when birds call in the night like that.” But so it happened that we smoked our pipes and then went to bed and slept. And it must have been soon after that we all waked together hearing much noise of a storm, and the tents were lifted like rags from us, and we held each other that the great wind should not blow us apart. The valley was full of thick trees, and we heard them falling and snapping in the blackness, and the rain fell upon us, and our *butin*, our things, were blown from us like matches. Simply we held to each other and were content not to die, all that night in the wind and rain. And so it happened that in the morning, to go out of the valley we were obliged to walk all the long of the little river, over the water, upon the trees that the storm had

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laid across it. Ah, yes! But that is quite true, Madame.

The gentle, deprecatory inflections seemed to leave an emptiness as they stopped, and as if trying to fill it, a loose bit of birch bark caught suddenly, and crackled and blazed with energy. A large spark flew across to the open flap of the tent. With a noiseless spring Vézina had it in his hands and had put out the fire instantly, but yet with a black-rimmed hole to tell the tale. Vézina mourned like a mother over a hurt child, and his soft lamenting "Ahs" and "*Malheurs*" almost brought tears to my eyes.

*Monsieur*.—Don't bother, Vézina. The tent isn't burned down yet.

Vézina (crouching once more by the fire, and drawing a puff of consolation from his pipe).—But it is that which might arrive, M'sieur, if one is not careful. I have known it to be. I and Godin, we have known it. One will not forget that night —*craie*, no!

The lean muscular figure in the dingy coat shivered.

## BOB AND THE GUIDES

I.—Is it a story, Vézina? Tell about it.

Vézina.—Not exactly that is to say a story, Madame. It is but of a night when I and Godin almost perished of the cold in sight of good warmth. *Tiens!* I will tell Madame, and she can judge how it was a small thing. We guided, I and my cousin Godin, for two *messieurs*, in the winter. And so it happened that we camped one night at a club camp of logs certainly in good order, with a large stove, and cooking utensils and all very convenient. The *messieurs* took the cabin, as was right, and Godin arranged our tent outside, and we had a small camp-stove and were comfortable. It was a great storm of wind and snow, but one is accustomed to make camp in the winter like that. With one blanket for each man and a small stove it is not bad—by no means. But by unhappiness we were careless, and that tent there took fire from the stove. *V'là!*—(he snapped his fingers sharply)—it was all gone like that. As I said, the wind was very great. We knocked at the door of the *messieurs'* log camp and told them what had happened. They were playing at cards by the fire—for there was a

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good lamp also in the camp. It was warm in that room. The *messieurs* said they were very sorry, it was a pity—and then they continued to play at cards. So I and Godin, we regarded them a moment, and then we went out and closed the door carefully, and put a log against it, as we had arranged, that the cold should not enter by the crack beneath. And as we had no tent, we were obliged to walk up and down to be a little warm. But it was a night of great coldness, and the wind drove the snow sideways, in sheets, and it cut us like knives, so that we could not become comfortable, walking. So we went into the woods and chopped logs to heat ourselves, and built a great fire, but yet while our faces burned, our backs were very cold, and our feet were chilled from standing in the snow. So we walked harder, and waved our arms with force. And we could see through the window of the camp where the *messieurs* played at cards very late, by the warm stove. And after they were in bed we saw the red of the stove-door where the fire shone through, and it seemed hard to us, because we were so cold, and also because we became very fatigued. It was a large

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room of about six yards square, and we others would not have taken much place in a corner. It would not have incommoded the *messieurs*, or very little. And toward morning, as we walked in the woods, Godin broke his snow-shoe, because in that great cold the wood of a *racquette* becomes brittle. And in arranging it we both escaped freezing by a very little—it was dangerous to arrest walking for even a few minutes, one sees well. And all the night as we turned toward the cabin from walking in the snow, we saw that evil red eye of the stove of the *messieurs*, looking out upon us without pity. We could have wished that the fire would go out.

Vézina lifted his swarthy and wrinkled care-worn face—a face not yet thirty years old—and smiled at us with apologetic eyes.

Vézina.—It was perhaps wrong to wish so, but we were extremely fatigued and cold, and men become wicked, so. Some *messieurs* do not remember that we others, though we are poor, are yet men. It is not right, I think, to treat us like the beasts, yet probably those *messieurs* did not rightly know how it was cold. But Madame is *ennuyée* with my

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long talking. I think there is wood enough. Does M'sieur wish that one should come in the night and arrange the fire? Or will that disturb M'sieur?

With soft rustling of underbrush the dull-colored figure had slipped into the woods again, leaving an echo that stole like a refrain into our dreams, of a gentle voice that seemed compounded of the bubbling burning of birch-wood fire, of the happy laughter of little rivers where the water runs in rapids, of all peaceful and homely forest sounds, and with them an echo of the loveliness of a soul that "suffers long and is kind."



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